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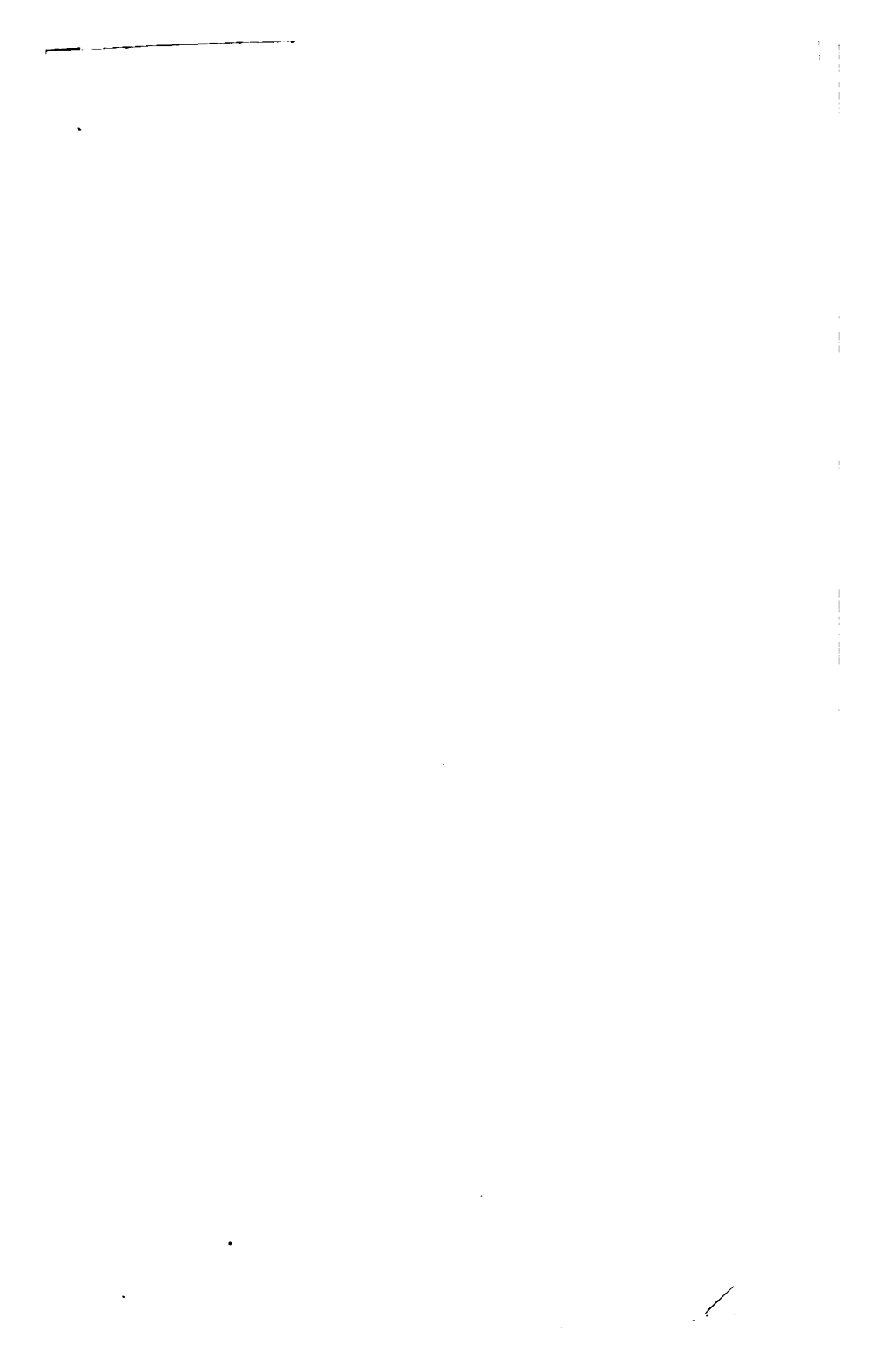
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THE
MORNING-LAND;

OR,

A THOUSAND AND ONE DAYS IN THE EAST.

BY FRIEDRICH BODENSTEDT.

FROM THE GERMAN

BY RICHARD WADDINGTON.

"But if this branch of literature has met with so many obstructions from the ignorant, it has, certainly, been checked in its progress by the learned themselves, most of whom have confined their study to the minute researches of verbal criticism; like men who discover a precious mine, but instead of searching for the rich ore, or for gems, amuse themselves with collecting smooth pebbles and pieces of crystal."

SIR WILLIAM JONES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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TO HIS

CHARMING FAIR FRIENDS

OF HESSIA,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE original of the following Work was published at Berlin, in the beginning of last year, and entitled "Tausend und ein Tag im Orient, von Friedrich Bodenstedt."

The delightful book has met with a brilliant success in Germany. All reviews, without distinction of their respective political and religious tendencies, bestow on it the highest praise. Rellstab, the celebrated critic, honours it, in the "Vossische Zeitung," with a special encomium. Alexander von Humboldt has expressed himself on the subject in the most flattering terms.

The design, accordingly, of this translation is to multiply the pleasure to be found by the

reader of the original work ; who, whether poet, philosopher, artist, historian, antiquary, friend of man, or lover of woman, having once opened the elegant Berlin edition, will certainly wander through the manifold beauty of its "Thousand and One Days."

But just as the tourist, after beholding the wonders of sky, cloud, mountain, and tree above and around him, looks down and gazes with new delight on the panorama of these depicted in the placid lake ; so if the German reader should find the various excellencies of the original work here faithfully mirrored and reproduced in the English translation, the highest object of the Translator will have been gained. And if the imperfections, which nevertheless are probably incident to the best translations, and are therefore not likely to be absent here, should be so transfigured and circumfused by the original light and beauty shining through, as to make his English readers forget the Translator in the presence of the Author, this will be the Translator's highest reward.

One or two particulars it will be proper for

this Preface to state. In the first place, the most difficult part of the translation has been read in MS. by the Author, in Germany, and cordially approved. This generous labour of revision on his part was all the more valuable, and indeed indispensable, as most of the poetry was already a translation from Russian and Oriental songs.

Next to the Author himself, the Translator is bound to acknowledge his obligation to a distinguished lady residing in Germany, who not only made some important corrections in the margin of the MS., but kindly added several paragraphs in her own style of version, for many happy expressions of which, the Translator gladly drew his pen through his own less skilful renderings.

Of the poetical portion of the work, he should observe, that in the translation of the Russian Lay, he has emulated the Author's own endeavour, as stated in the first chapter of the book; for the rest, that in the numerous poems and songs, the original forms are faithfully imitated, occasional variations only having been made where the genius of the English language required them.

Some interesting notes on foreign expressions frequently occurring, have likewise been communicated by the Author; these, as well as a few other interspersed remarks on the peculiarity of the Russian metre, &c., are arranged together in an Appendix.

And now having had the honour of introducing Dr. Bodenstedt to the literary circles of England, the Translator, desirous, in his occasional re-appearances throughout the course of the work, of escaping observation, "*et d'effacer lui-même,*" retires behind the scenes.

LEICESTER, JUNE, 1851.

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PROLOGUE.

I CARRY the reader back for a moment to Vienna, amidst the noise of war, in the last days of October, 1848.

The heaven was coloured red by the high up-shooting flames of the burning suburbs, and on all towers and roofs lay the purple reflection of the sea of fire. The broad Danube licked with blood-red tongue the guardian walls of the city.

In the streets resounded the clashing of arms, and the rolling of drums: the *générale* was beaten almost without ceasing. Behind the barricades, over-floated by their streaming ensigns, watchfires were burning, and round the blaze cowered arm-

bearing men, with their faces blackened by the smoke, and half-wild women in strange attire.

Press-gangs were marching through the city in all directions, and seizing on whatever came in their way in the shape of capable man. Here whirled along a troop of marvellously-armed labourers, singing as they passed, and led by officers of the academical legion. There a few students were urging into the conflict a whole multitude of citizens, frightened up from cellars and vaults. And the conflict which was being carried on in the Leopoldstadt, around the giant barricades of the Jägerzeil, was a terrible and desperate one indeed. Every house was a fortress, every window a port-hole.

How the volleys of musketry rattled as they crossed ! how the kindling rockets hissed ! how the fire-throated artillery thundered ! And what a crash there was, roaring far away, when the cannon-balls struck into the barricades, or when, beneath its monstrous burden, a whole wall of houses broke down together !

The earth trembled ; the heavy groaning of the wounded, the guttural death-note of the dying, was drowned by the chaotic din of the instruments of

destruction, which were changing the entire French Avenue into a heap of rubbish, and the houses of the Jägerzeil, as far as the Prater, into ruins.

One foresaw the issue of the unequal contest, yet they fought outside with the fury of despair. The city, overburdened by fugitives from the suburbs, soon began to fail in provisions.

Whole families, whose houses were consumed with flames, came loaded with the little they had saved, and implored lodging and shelter.

The confusion was indescribable; and a deep melancholy, an anxious suspense and unrest, were visible on every countenance.

Every connection with the outer world was cut off, for a girdle of bayonets encircled the unfortunate Vienna; and many a one, whose dearest was without, sighed for weeks in vain for intelligence and communication.

On one of these days of terror, which it was horrible to live through, and which it is impossible fully to describe, a number of friends and relatives had assembled in my dwelling with the declining eve, in order to spend a short hour of repose in familiar conversation, after the agitating experience of the day.

Still, with the wild tumult without, and the restlessness of our own feelings, the conversation would not succeed at all; every moment was broken in upon by the noise of the artillery, or by the rolling of the drums.

"Bodenstedt!" said Auerbach, "you are less agitated than we; tell us some of your adventures in the Land of the Morning. Wake with a merry touch the memories of your past life. That will carry us away into a new world, and dissipate the depression of the present."

The thought found response in the company.

"Yes do!—Tell us!" they all cried, and drew nearer with their chairs.

"Tell us of Caucasus," said Kaufmann, "and of your famous teacher, Mirza-Schaffy. That is my favourite."

"And of the Black Sea," cried Karl Beck, "and of the Cossacks and the Turks."

"And of the beautiful Georgian women," cried Max Schlesinger, "and of Ararat and Armenia."

Every one of them would have something in particular. A spirit of cheerfulness was come over them all, even before I began my narration; for

those who had thus entreated me were already acquainted with a part of my wanderings. And willingly did I comply with their wishes, and tell them of Mirza-Schaffy, of his wisdom and delightful songs ; of Ararat and Armenia ; of Caucasus and the beautiful Georgian women ; and of the Black Sea, and of the Cossacks and Turks.

And so we sat far on into the deep night ; all were listening intently to my narrations. No one thought any more of the tumult without, nor of the burning suburbs, and the beat of the drums, and the firing.

Between that day and this, as I am writing down these recollections, exactly a year has fled. My friends have, in the meanwhile, often urged me to give through the press a wider extension to the narrations which exercised so happy an influence on them.

Many changes since that time have transpired in the world, but men have continued much the same : and many a one there is yet, who after the perplexities of the day, feels the desire of seeking for rest and refreshment in more pleasurable subjects, than the politics of the present age afford.

For such readers, these leaves are written ; and if my narrations, prettily printed and bound, are able to excite the same impressions as once they did by the spoken word, the object of this book is fulfilled.

THOUSAND AND ONE DAYS

IN

THE EAST.

CHAPTER I.

FROM MOSCOW TO THE STEPPES OF THE DON—ECHOES
FROM RUSSIA.

Our journey leads us from the ancient capital of Russia, to the vine-clad gardens of Tiflis, the mountain-encompassed capital of Georgia.

I shall only depict to you, in a few slight sketches, the general condition and population of those monotonous tracts and immeasurable steppes, through which we have to wander before we ascend the majestic Caucasus and its world of hills.

September is not yet closed, and already the landscape around us wears a wintry aspect.

The sky is overcast with grey clouds, and the air is as dark and dusky at mid-day as at the approach of the evening twilight; flocks of crows and ravens are swinging on the leafless boughs; the autumnal wind dismally pipes over the snow-whitened fields, through which the road winds like a huge black stripe; for the ice lies yet too thin, and the snow too loose to resist the hoofs of the horses, and the incisions of the carriage-wheels; and every time the light winter array is broken through, a black ooze wells from the slimy soil, like jets of tar.

Notwithstanding the rich, fruitful soil, which so advantageously distinguishes the governments of Tula and Voronesh, we find here in the miserable villages a poor and worn population.

The cause of this distressing appearance consists in the fact that both of these governments are for the most part broken up into small manors; and the smaller the number of a noble's bondmen, the greater the sacrifices he demands of them.

There are families who live in great style at Petersburg and Moscow, without having any other income than the taxes which they exact from four or six hundred bondmen.

What wonder that the poor peasants know no

higher object of life, than to wear themselves out in the service of their lords, without a thought of enlivening their own sorrowful existence !

And yet among this tough and yielding race, are found not seldom well-built, powerful forms of men ; whilst beauty among women, here, as throughout all Russia, is exceedingly rare. The heavy toils to which in this, more than in all other lands, the women are subjected from their youth up ; the unwholesome atmosphere of their damp, uncleanly dwellings ; the little care they can expend upon themselves ; and many other oppressing circumstances, are ever active in checking the free development of their bodies.

In the towns through which we pass on our way from Moscow until we are out beyond Voronesh, where the steppe of the Cossacks, prolific of vegetation, begins, the first thing that strikes us is the uniformity of the Russian houses.

He who has seen Moscow knows all other Russian towns.

Apart from the entirely modern Petersburg, any considerable though rude variety of architectural design, is really nowhere else to be found than in Moscow ; here almost alone do we get the im-

pression of an actual town, of an enduring settlement of industrious men.

Almost all the other towns of this country, with their streets in straight lines, and their houses exactly like barracks, coloured yellow or white-washed, appear like so many huge caravanseries, and their inhabitants like restless pilgrims. For the Russian knows not of home in our acceptance of the word. He cannot deny his origin, nor divest himself of the wandering spirit inherited by him from the great nomade race from which he sprang.

The relations of the country, moreover, even at this day, render a secure and peaceful life impossible.

The brisk inland trade, the war in the Caucasus, a widely ramified administration, frequent change of office, and a hundred other circumstances, occasion a constant moving to and fro in this giant empire, which spreads itself over three parts of the world.

The physician, who to-day has passed his examination in Moscow, will, a few weeks hence, perhaps, be curing bilious fevers on the shores of the Black Sea; the newly-married functionary, just settled in Petersburg, is suddenly appointed to a government office on the frontiers of China; the officer of the guards, who intends in the evening to pay a visit to

the lady of his love, is unexpectedly dispatched in the afternoon as a courier to the Caucasus. Thus it fares with all classes of society.

And as the Russian nowhere feels himself at home for any length of time, one nowhere feels at home for any length of time with him.

The gentle power of habit and the charm of remembrance are no spell for him. He takes no root in the past, and thinks not of the future. This truly oriental character of the Russian—to live only for the passing moment, and only to enjoy the present—is conspicuous even in his dwelling.

He builds for himself alone and his own individual likings, without a thought of those who may come after him. And because he has no spirit of invention, nor taste for beautiful structures, he allows his house to be built after the fashion of those around him, and usually in such haste, that often in a few years the building is nothing more than a plastered ruin.

Hence the frigid uniformity of the Russian houses, and the singular circumstance that there is no telling by the appearance of any house, whether it was built one year, ten, or a hundred years ago—so different from the old towns of Germany, Italy,

and other countries, where the buildings are, as it were, living pages of history, instructive mediators betwixt the present and the past.

The only things worthy of remark in the Russian towns, are the richly ornamented churches and grand bazaars.

As in architecture, so in sculpture and painting, the Russians are far in the rear of all other European nations.

The objection that the pressure of bondage, which weighs so heavily on the great mass of the people, incapacitates them for free mental activity and for all loftier aspirations, is invalidated by the example of the nations of antiquity; amongst whom, under similar conditions, art reached its highest development, and the genius of the people, at the cost of the oppressed masses, raised to itself memorials of eternal fame.

Moreover, the introduction of bondage into Russia dates, as is well known, from comparatively recent times, when the Russians were already engaged in active intercourse with foreign lands. But neither the influx of foreign encouragement, nor the protection and patronage which the Czars have bestowed on the arts, have been able to nurture any

taste for these among the Russians ; whilst their ever-restless disposition, and inclination for the nomadic life, alienate them from employments that would attach them to their native land.

In the few remains that have come down to us of plastic art among the ancient Russians (as of Slavonians in general), we discover only the rudest traces of design.

The chronicles make mention of statues of the old Slavonian Gods : of Perun, the God of Thunder ; of Usslad, the God of Joy ; of Polelja, the Slavonian Ceres ; of Lado, the Goddess of Love and Beauty ; but, unfortunately, no vestige of these remains. It may be supposed that they occupied the same rank as those uncouth stone-carvings, which are still to be found here and there in the wide steppes of the Cossacks, where the Don and the Cuban stream over the plains.

In contrast with the neglect which the fine arts have experienced in Russia, and indeed from the same causes which produced this neglect, the language attained, even at a very early period, a high degree of perfection.

It became the sole Caryates of the moral and intellectual nature of the people ; in it the Russian

could procure memorials that should accompany him on all his wanderings; into it he breathed all his thoughts and feelings, all his grief and woe; and its flexible, rich-sounding forms easily adapted themselves to all his needs.

Hence the astonishing perfection, the surprising copiousness of forms and words, which we find in the Russian language; and hence also the high significance which its national songs possess for the thoughtful friend of history.

The history, the inward and outward life, all the wisdom and the folly, all the virtues and imperfections of the people, are reflected in these songs with wonderful truth.

And they are marked by such a power of expression, by such a richness of imagery and conception, that the student does not find historical information merely, but high poetical enjoyment, in these old memorials; to which no production of the later artificial poets of Russia comes near in significance.

It is somewhat singular that for the well-deserved praise which these later poets have received, both in and out of Russia, they have rather to thank their poetical failings, than their essential merits.

Only where they have drawn from the fountains of the old traditions and songs of their country do they appear truly great ; whilst their remaining works are merely more or less successful imitations of foreign originals.

The enlightenment and over-refinement of the higher classes, to which the most noted of the modern Russian poets belong, and the misery and sad ignorance of the great masses of the people, form antagonisms difficult to harmonize.

The unnatural enjoyment, the vapid satiety, the loathing of the present, the weariness of the world, exhibited on the one hand, afford no material for song ; and the poet who seeks his heroes among the subjects of such imperfections, can only produce caricatures of men. It is to be regretted that this poetry of Unnature has found its representatives in the most gifted spirits of Russia—Pushkin and Lermontov.

The life of the Russian people on the other hand, notwithstanding the immoral basis on which it rests, affords a rich fulness of poetic elements ; and those poets, wherein they have gone with the people, have obtained great and enduring praise.

The contrasts here briefly indicated we find most strikingly expressed in Lermontov, who, in his changeful fate, often leads us astray into poetical abuses, but always returns to truth and nature.

Whilst in his novel, "The Hero of our Time," now known also by translations in Germany, he gives us anything but a refreshing picture of the life and condition of the upper circles of Russian society, and in many of his smaller poems indulges in Byronic strains of disgust with life, and, like Heine is weary of the world, he has reared for himself an imperishable monument of fame, in those of his poems which are founded on history and on the life of the people.

To this belongs, before all, a poem, written in the old Russian style, wherein he brings before us scenes of the time of Ivan the Cruel.

The material of this piece is taken from the old national ballads, and shaped with masterly hand into a poetic whole that may worthily stand by the side of the best productions of recent times.

I think I shall render a service to the intelligent reader, if I perform the part of an interpreter to

this fine poem, a national song in the noblest sense of the word, wherein are seen reflected the whole character of the people in all its lights and shades, and the condition of the country, as it still to this day remains essentially the same.

In the translation, the tone, arrangement of words, and metre of the original have been preserved with the greatest possible fidelity and care.

Longer introduction is not necessary; the poem, as a genuine work of art, will speak for itself.

L A Y

*Of the Czar Ivan Vassiljevitsh, of his young Lifeguard, and
of the bold Merchant Kalashnikov.*

O thou dread Czar, Ivan Vassiljevitsh !
Of thee we have made our clear-tuning song,
Of thy favourite guard, Kiribéjevitsh,
And of the bold merchant, Kalashnikov ;—
It was made in the tone of the olden time,
And sung to the tuneful Gussli sweet.
Full oft did we sing it, and oft repeat,
For the joy, for the mirth of the truly believing.

And the Bojar Matvéi Romodanovsky,
He gave us a bowl of foaming mead ;
Moreover the fair-faced Bojarina,
Did present to us on a salver bright,
A towel new and of silken work.
Three days and three nights they treated us well,
And to our song ever listened anew.

I.

No longer in heaven the red sun shines,
No more with it dallies the sombre cloud-mass :
At the banquet, behold, with his golden crown,
Sits the dread Czar, Ivan Vassiljevitch !
Behind him stand mute the grave Stolniki,*
And before him the Bojars and princes all ;
Close at his side stands the lifeguard band ;
And the Czar drinks deep to the honour of God,
To his own enjoyment and heart's delight.
With a gracious smile then commands the Czar
Sweet wine to bring that's from over the sea,
Wherewithal his golden goblet to fill :
And he proffers the wine to his guardsmen there :
And they drank and magnified the Czar.
Only one of all from the lifeguard band,
A boisterous champion, a comrade bold,

* Stolniki—all dignitaries who officiated at the table of the Czar.

Did not moisten his lips in the golden goblet;
In silence his gloomy look downwards he bent,
Silent sank his head on his spacious breast—
But grim thoughts are swelling the spacious breast.
Forthwith wrinkled the Czar his jet-black brows,
And turned on him his keenest look;
As the hawk above from his cloudy height
Looks down on the young, the azure-winged dove.—
Still the champion raised his eye no whit.
And the dread Czar murmured a threatening word,
And darkly kept his look on the comrade bold.

“Thou, our trusty henchman, Kiribéjevitsh,
Art thou hiding evil thoughts in thy breast?
Or grudgest thou, say, our princely glory?
Or art discontented in honour’s place?
When the moon arises, the stars rejoice
In her splendour to wander through heaven’s pavilion;
But whatever star hides itself in the clouds,
Must fall down extinguished swift to the earth.
Thou’rt displeased, as it seems, Kiribéjevitsh,
With thy Czar, at his feast and his heart’s delight;
And art yet of the race of Skuratov,
And wast reared in the house of Maljutin!”

Then replied unto him Kiribéjevitsh,
To the dread Czar, and with low salute :

“O thou ruler of us, Ivan Vassiljevitch!
Vex not thyself for a worthless slave.
To the heated soul suits not sweet wine,

It scares not away my gloomy thoughts !
But if I have vexed thee—thy will be fulfilled :
On the block let my turbulent head be laid ;
On my shoulders it lies like a troublesome load,
Before thee to the cold, damp earth it is bowed.”

And then spoke to him Czar Ivan Vassiljevitch :
“ But what makes thee so troubled, thou comrade bold ?
Hast thou no more delight in thy velvet kaftan ?
Thy adorned cap with its sable fur ?
Fallest thou in gold—hast an empty purse ?
Or have notches disfigured thy sword of steel ?
Or has harm befallen thy trusty steed ?
Or a wound of shame hast thou received
In the boxing fight on the Mosqua’s stream ?”*

Thereupon answered him Kiribéjevitch,
Denyingly shaking his curly head :
“ Not the boxing fray has awakened my grief,
No bond of debt, and no failure of gold ;
Right vigorous is my brave desert-steed,
And my sharp sword flashes with glassy sheen ;
And on festal days, through thy favour, Czar,
Than others I am not more meanly attired ;
But listen, and know what has made me sad :

* This refers to the Russian prize-fights, which were held on feast days in winter on the ice of the Mosqua. A fuller description of these games follows in the sequel of the poem itself.

On my valorous horse I rode, full of heart,
To the Mosqua's stream, to the river of ice,
With a silken girdle around my kaftan,
On my head my cap—my velvet cap,
With its dusky sable-fur begirt.
Near the gates, before the houses, stood
Many maidens, all red-cheeked, pretty, and young,
Gaily whispering, toying, tittering there—
Only one of them whispered and tittered not,
In her many-hued Fata* she veiled herself
In holy Russia, our dear mother-earth,
The watchful eye seeks for such beauty in vain :
Her gait is the glide of a wave-floated swan,
And her glance is as sweet as the glance of a dove,
Her voice is as pure as the nightingale's song,
And glowing her cheeks, suffused with bloom,
As the crimson morn in the heaven of God ;
In golden tresses her long hair flows,
With circles of jewels adorned and clasped ;
Round her neck it entwines, her shoulders around,
And kisses her white, her high-swelling breast . . .
She is sprung from the race of a merchant famed,
She is called by name Alona Dmitrevna.
—As I gazed on the beauty, I lost myself,
Hung my arms down nerveless—my lusty arms ;
Fast my eyes grew dim, my flashing eyes :

* Fata—a kind of veil.

It dismays, it oppresses me, orthodox Czar !
That my strength pines away, and my brave heart is
foiled.

My swift-footed steed of the desert I loathe,
My rich vesture alike, my velvet attire ;
And all idle to me now are silver and gold.
With whom shall I share my silver and gold—
Before whom shall I show the might of my youth ?
Before whom shall I boast of my jewelled attire ?

Let me go far away to the region of steppes,
There in freedom to live the Cossack's wild life ;
There soon shall my head, my stormy head,
Adorn the lance of the Bussurman,*
And to Tartars fierce for a booty fall
My spiritfui horse, my keen-edged blade,
And my gear as well, the Circassian.
My tearful eyes shall the vultures pick,
My humid bones shall the rain-streams wash,
And fly my unburied and wasting dust,
Borne away by the winds through all regions of air . . .”

With a smile, then replied Ivan Vassiljevitch :
Now, thou, my henchman true ! for thy pain,
Thy sorrow, and grief is the remedy short :
There take thee my ring, with rubies bedecked,
And this necklace take, with amber strung.
First seek out a woman prudent and cunning,

* Bussurman—Mussulman.

And skilful in wooing ; then send the rich gift
 Forthwith to thy loved one, Alona Dmitrevna :
 If it pleases her, soon thy bridal hour comes,
 If it pleases her not, be not angry for that."

—" O most orthodox Czar, Ivan Vassiljevitch,
 In part has deceived thee thy crafty slave,
 Has spoken falsely, not told the full truth !
 He has hidden from thee that the beautiful one
 In the church of God to another was given ;
 The wife is she of a merchant young,
 And bound by our law—the Christian law !"

* * * * *

Children join in sweet—sound the Gussli meet !
 The poet sings to the tone of its strings !
 For the merriment of the Bojar good,
 For the fair-faced Bojarina's thanks !

II.

Before his booth a young merchant sits,
 The stately youth Stephen Paramonovitch,*
 Of the family name Kalashnikov ;

* Stephen Paramonovitch, i.e., Stephen, son of Paramon.
 The proper family names are only occasionally used in
 Russia, though great importance is attached to them. It
 should here be observed that at the time of the action of
 this poem, the merchants constituted the proper aristocracy
 of Russia.

Silken wares he is spreading carefully out,
With sweet words he allures in buyers that pass,
The wealth he has gained he counts over sly.
But no lucky day to the merchant's share fell,
For many rich Bojars went him by,
But into his booth came never a one.

The last sound of the vesper bell dies away,
Dimly gleams o'er the Kremlin the evening red,
Fast fly the clouds over heaven wide,—
The snow-storm, lashed by the wind, drives on ;
By degrees is the merchant-court clear of men.
Then likewise shuts Stephen Paramonovitch
His booth fast to, with its oaken door,
With a genuine German lock therein ;
And musing he goes to his home and thinks
Of his young wife beyond the Mosqua's stream.

And he reaches at last his lofty house,
And wonder takes Stephen Paramonovitch :
His fair young wife did not meet his glance,
Even yet uncovered the oak-table stood,
Scarcely flickered the lamp of the Holy One's shrine.
And his aged housekeeper called he straight :
"Come tell me, tell me, Jereméjevna,
Say whither is vanished, where hidden herself,
At so late an hour, Alona Dmitrevna ?
And have my beloved children dear
Drunk their tea already, and tired with play
Been taken already thus early to bed ?"

“O thou, my lord, Stephen Paramonovitch,
Very strange are the things that have passed to-day :
To the vesper prayers went Alona Dmitrevna ;
The priest and his young wife already returned
Have kindled their lamps for the night’s repast . . .
But thy own young beautiful wife to this hour
Has not yet from the church retraced her steps.
And thy children dear are not laid asleep,
Nor have they played ; they have wept all the while,
The poor darlings will their dear mother see.”

And grim were the thoughts overcasting the brow
Of the noble merchant, Kalashnikov ;
At the window stood he, looked into the street—
But in dusky night the street darkened fast ;
The white snow flaked down, to a thick layer grew,
And the footsteps of passing men were lost.

Hark ! there’s a sound in the hall as of opening door,
And the soft sound he catches of flying steps ;
He listens, looks round—and, by holy God !
Lo there, trembling before him, his young wife stands,
All trembling and pale, with uncovered hair,
With the golden locks wildly dishevellèd :
White snow-flakes dangle for jewels there :
Her eyes roll round in a frenzy wild,
And the word from her lips without meaning falls.

“Now, why art thou roaming out, wife, so late ?
From what court declare, from what mart comest thou,
That thy hair is so tossed and dishevellèd ;

That thy raiment is quite disordered and rent ?
Hast thou been to a feast, hast thou sought sweet love
With some rich and handsome Bojar's son ?—
For this, at the shrine of the Mother of God,
For life's companion to me wast thou joined,
For this were our golden rings interchanged ? . . .
Mark thou ! in a chamber of gloom I shall bar thee,
With iron-bestudded, oaken door,
That the bright day of God keep closed on thee,
And that further my good name thou tarnish not . . .”

As Alona Dmitrevna the words drank in,
Paled fearful and trembled the lovely wife,
Like an autumn leaf by the tempest stirred ;
Bitter, bitter tears rolled down her cheeks,
And she threw herself at her husband's feet.

“ O thou, my lord, my bright sunlight thou !
O, hear me quietly, or bid me die !
Thy words are to me like a keen-edged sword ;
Wherewith thou tearest my bleeding heart.
It was not the torment of death I feared,
And not the people of evil tongue,
The loss of thy love was all I feared !

As I came from the vesper-service home,
The winding and lonely streets along,
On a sudden a clanking noise smote my ear ;
I looked round in alarm—there ran to me a man.
My tottering feet were weakening beneath,
With my silken fata I covered myself.

And with force he seized my tremulous hand,
And with whisperings soft he said to me :
‘ Why shudderest so, my beautiful one ?
No murderer I, no night-prowling thief ;
Of the Czar’s train am I, of the dread Czar’s train,
And I hold the name Kiribéjevitsh,
Of the famed stock of Maljutin . . . ’

Then I shuddered more fearfully than before,
And my poor head reeled in confusion wild.
He began to caress and kiss me too,
And fondling he spoke to me ever thus :

‘ Tell me, dearest beauty, what thou wilt have,
Thou charming dove, my beloved one !
Dost thou wish for gold, or for pearly pride ?
Or for flowered velvet or costly gems ?
Thou, like a Czarina, shalt go arrayed,
To the envy and grief of all other brides,
So thou let me not die a sinful death :
Oh love me, my fair one, and kiss me, dear,
If only but once, for the first and last time !—’

Then he kissed me again, and fondled me more,
I feel even now my burning cheeks glow,
Like a madman more closely he clasped me round,
And ruthless kisses he lavished on me . . .
From the windows around us the neighbours peered,
And scoffingly pointed their fingers at us.

And when struggling I burst from his violent arms,
And in wildering haste ran frantic home,

I had left in the hands of the robber there
My embroidered kerchief, the gift of your love,
And my rich Bucharian fata too.
Thus was I disgraced, by the villain shamed,
Even I thy honoured and faithful wife!—
And the evil women who saw me there!—
O God! I am ever dishonoured and shamed.

O give me not, me, thy faithful wife,
To base derision and scorn a prize!
Whom besides thee have I who can help me now?
In the wide world I stand as an orphan alone:
My father has long in the damp grave slept,
And by his side is my mother's grave;
My eldest brother, thou knowest thyself,
Has long disappeared in foreign land,
And my youngest is still a little child,
Still needing himself my help and care . . .”

Thus sadly lamented Alona Dmitrevna,
And bitter and fast were the tears she wept.

And forthwith sends Stephen Paramonovitch
For both of his younger brothers to come.

And the brothers came and saluted him;
And thus they questioned him, both of them.
“Speak, how is it with thee, has sorrow befallen,
That thou sendest for us at so late an hour,—
So late in the boisterous winter-night?”

“Yea, yea, dear brothers, a sorrow has fallen
On me and on all my family too:

Dishonoured is now our noble house,
By the Czar's lifeguard, Kiribéjevitsh ;
A sorrow my soul cannot brook nor endure ;
That too heavily lies on my suffering heart.
When to-morrow the festal encounter they hold
On the Mosqua in presence of the Czar,
I will fight with the lifeguard Kiribéjevitsh
A desperate fight for life and death.
And should he slay me—despair not for that,
To the Virgin pray, the most holy One !
Ye are younger than I, are still fresher in strength.
And lighter the sins that are weighing on you,
God himself shall your shield, your helper be !”

Then in answer outspake the brothers straight :
“ Whither blows the wind from the firmament-vault,
Thither hasten the clouds, the willing clouds.
When the blue eagle calls to the carnage of death,
To the banquet-revel, the feast of the dead,
Then follow his young in swift flight all.
Thou art our elder brother, our second sire,
Do what seems to thee good, to thine own will good,
We obey thee all freely, abandon thee not.”

III.

O'er Mosqua's city of gold-capped domes,
O'er the ancient Kremlin's white stone walls,
Behind the far-wood and the mountains blue,
The dazzling white roofs of the houses begilding,

And the damp, dusky masses of vapour dividing,
Flames the light of the rosy Morn ;
And smiling she clears her ringlets of gold,
And bathes her face in the crystal snow ;
Like a beauty herself in a mirror beholding,
Looks she down sweetly smiling from heaven to earth.
Why, beautiful Morning, say, hast thou awaked ?
What the joy, say, that thou art come hither to see ?

To the city already are wending and meet,
The bold Knights of the Fist, the Moscovish knights,
To the Mosqua's stream, to the icy course
Approaches the dread, the orthodox Czar,
With his mighty Bojars and his lifeguard band.
And he orders a silver chain to drawn,
A silver chain with gold adorned ;
And they mark with the chain an open place,
Twenty-five Sashés* for the battle's play.
Thereupon bids the Czar Ivan Vassiljevitch,
His loud-voiced herald the summons to call :
" Hither haste to the fight, ye comrades bold !
Our father, the dread Czar, to entertain ;
Haste hither, come on to the spacious ring.
Who is victor among you, him praises the Czar,
And him who is vanquished our Lord God shall forgive."

And forward steps out bold Kiribéjevitch,
To the Czar he bends down to his girdle low,
From his strong shoulders casts he his velvet coat,

* Sashé—A Russian measure of length.

Plants firm in his side his brave right hand,
Adjusts with the other his handsome cap,
And waits for a rival to match him in fight.
For the third time goes forth the summons clear—
But not one of the champions rouses around ;
All stand mute, each stumbling against the rest.

Round the circle the lifeguard goes to and fro,
And derides the surrounding champions loud :
“ Now, why stand ye still there, like men full of fear !
Will none of ye venture out under my hand,
For the Czar’s delectation, the orthodox Czar ? ”

Divides on a sudden the crowd on both sides,
And forward steps Stephen Paramonovitch.
The brave young merchant, the comrade bold,
Of the family name Kalashnikov ;
Low bows he before the dread Czar first,
Then before the white Kremlin and holy Church,
And lastly before the assembled Russians.
A wild fire flashed from his eagle eye,
With inflexible glance the lifeguardsmen he scanned,
Bold over against him he places himself,
Draws his safety-securing, thick boxing-gloves on,
Draws his spacious invincible shoulders back,
And trimly smoothenes his curly beard.
Thereupon says to him Kiribéjevitch :
“ But tell me before, thou comrade bold,
Of what lineage-stock and race art thou ?
And by what name dost thou call thyself ?

That for whom the death-mass to perform they may know,
And that I by his name may know whom I have
slain."

And him straight answered Stephen Paramonovitch :
"I am called by name Stephen Kalashnikov,
I am born of a noble, illustrious pair,
In God's commands I have ever lived ;
I have never dishonoured my neighbour's wife,
Never lurked a thief in the dead of night,
Never hidden myself from the light of day . . .
Well spoken hast thou a word of truth :
Over one of us the death-mass shall be sung,
And no later than noontide, to-morrow's noon ;
And one shall exult in victory's pride,
With his brave compeers at the banquet's mirth . . .
No time is it now for jesting and scorn,
I am come to thee, thou Pagan-born,
In the desperate struggle of life and death."

And as Kiribéjevitch the words drank in,
His countenance paled, became white as the snow,
His bright-flashing eye grew troubled and dark,
There ran through him cold like an icy breath,
On his opening lips died away the word.

In silence approach both champions near,
And the desperate chivalrous fight begins.

Kiribéjevitch raises first his hand,
And brings down a blow on Kalashnikov,
And strikes him deep in the midst of his breast—

The valorous breast quivered 'neath the blow,
And back staggered Stephen Paramonovitch ;
He wore on his breast a metallic cross,
With holy relics from Kiev adorned,
And the cross was crushed, was pressed deep in his
breast,

And in swelling stream gushed the blood from the wound.

Then spake out brave Stephen Paramonovitch :

“ Whom misfortune strikes, on him let it come ;
I shall battle as long as there's strength in my arms !”
And again he collects and rallies himself,
Gathers up into one the whole of his strength,
And brings down a blow with invincible weight,
On his foe's left temple and shoulder beneath.

And the young lifeguardeman groanèd low,
Failed, stumbled, fell heavily dead to the ground ;
Headlong he was hurdled on the cold, white snow ;
As a young fir-tree in the forest-wild
From its roots hewed off comes crashing down,
While the resin oozes from its trunk.

When the Czar saw that, Ivan Vassiljevitsh,
He broke into fury, he stamped on the ground,
And grimly contracting his darkening brows,
Commands to be seized the merchant bold,
The brave young merchant Kalashnikov,
And be brought before his presence there.

And then spake to him the most orthodox Czar :

“ Account for thyself, and answer me true,

With design, or by chance, has thy strong arm slain
My valorous Knight Kiribéjevitsh ?”

“ I will answer thee frankly, most orthodox Czar,
With a clear design did I slay the man,
But wherefore and why—that tell I thee not,
That I answer to God, the only One.
Command me to death, to the Place of Doom,
My innocent head from its trunk be cleaved ;
But let not my dear children suffer for me,
Nor my young and innocent wife ; nor withdraw,
Dread Czar, from my brothers thy favour and grace . . .”

“ Thou art well advised, thou comrade bold,
Brave Knight of the Fist, young merchant’s son,
To have answered me thus in duty and truth.
For thy young wife and children I here appoint
From my treasury yearly a pension fair,
To thy brothers, grant from this day henceforth,
Free commerce through Russia’s dominion wide,
Exemption from paying imposts and tolls ;
But thou, for thyself, young merchant’s son,
At the Place of Doom, on the scaffold high,
Must lay to rest thy boisterous head.
I shall cause to be whetted a potent blade,
And the headsman command to put on his array ;
And the great city-bell to ring clear and loud,
That all the dwellers of Mosqua’s walls
May learn how my grace, too, is showed to thee. . . .”
To the Place moves slowly the peopled throng,

The great bell it rings a saddening peal,
Far around the mournful news wanders forth.
At the Place of Doom on the scaffold high,
In a red shirt dressed, and white apron clean,
With the great, the sharp-whetted axe in his hand,
The headsman's slave cheerily goes to and fro,
Expecting his victim, the merchant's son,
And the champion young, the merchant's son,
Is bidding farewell to his brothers twain.

“Now, brothers beloved, my dearest friends,
Let me kiss you once in a last embrace,
Our last separation in this world.
Greet from me Alona Dmitrevna,
Help her her sorrow to soften down,
And not to relate to my children of me!
And greet from me our dear father house,
And all my brave kindred greet from me,
And pray for me in the church of God,
For the health of my soul, the sinful one!”

There died, then, Stephen Paramonovitch,
In dreadful torment a death of shame;
High up on the scaffold was weltering
And rolling his blood-dripping, fallen head.
And they buried him out beyond Mosqua's stream,
On an open field where three ways meet—
To Tula, to Rjäsan, and Vladimir;
And out of the damp earth made they a monument high,
And on it a cross of maple-wood planted.

And howling and roaring the winds rage now
O'er the lonely grave that no name adorns ;
And many good people go there by,
Goes an old man by—he crosses himself,
Goes a young man by—he looks proudly thereon,
Goes a maiden by—her eye grows dim,
Goes a poet by—he sings a mournful lay.

* * * * *

Heyday, singers, young of blood !
Sing once more in joyous mood,
Was the opening good, let the end, too, be good,
And ere we have led the song quite through,
Honour we give to whom honour is due.
To our generous-hearted Bojar be praise !
To the fair-faced Bojarina praise !
And to all good Christian people praise !

CHAPTER II.

THE STEPPE OF THE DON.

" I SWAM out upon the plain of the dry ocean. The carriage sinks in verdure, and staggers on like a skiff through the waves of the rustling meadows. Overflowed with flowers, I sail among the coral islands of the grassy steppes. Already the twilight hour is falling round us, with neither path nor hill to meet the peering eye. I look upwards to heaven, and watch for the stars, the guides of the mariner "

So Mickievicz once hailed the land of steppes, visiting it probably at a more favourable time of the year than I.

The steppe indeed, with its gently rising hills, indistinguishably mingled in the distance, was like enough now to a dry ocean; but the grass lay withered and pinched by the cold storms of autumn, or trodden down by the horses of the Cossacks, and miserable were the traces yet remaining of the rich vegetation of summer.

The winter landscape which had accompanied us from Moscow, disappeared at Jeletz, half way between Tula and Voronesh.

From Jeletz, as far as Sadonsk, so named from its position close by the Don, our way lay through an all but bottomless filth to more delightful scenes. The roads improved, the air became milder, the sky brightened up again, and houses splendidly built, and charmingly situated in the midst of spacious gardens, diversified the country with beauty.

At Voronesh there was already a sensible change of climate. The thermometer indicated 16° R.,* whereas, on my departure from Moscow at the same time of the day, it stood at freezing point.

Nowhere in the world have I seen such a number of windmills as in this corn-abounding province.

* 16° Reaum. are equal to 68° Fahr.—Tr.

In all villages they stand out conspicuous ; all hills are covered with them, and the singular manner in which they are constructed, is still more surprising than their number. Their sails form a complete square, held together and supported by four colossal spokes.

The many chalk-hills too, which intersect the country, and, at a distance, in the dazzling sunlight gleam like little glaciers, have a peculiarly striking effect.

From Kasanskaja in one track we cross the Don, and arrive at the land of the Cossacks named from the river.

The uniformity of this thinly-peopled land displays itself again in the poor habitations, which are all built after one pattern, and each of which affords but scanty room for a small family, and the most necessary furniture.

Most of these houses, standing apart from each other in the Stanitzas (Cossack villages), are surrounded by little gardens, which besides the usual kitchen vegetables, yield in particular, excellent wine and melons.

Every Stanitza, however insignificant, has its

little bazaar, where all the productions of the country are duly represented.

The Don Cossacks inherit nothing from their valiant ancestors, but a great inclination for drink and idleness; all house and field-work is left to the women, who are everywhere of a compact and powerful make, and handle axe, spade, and ladle with equal dexterity.

Pretty faces are more frequent here than in Russia proper, but real beauty I have only found in Novo-Tsherkask, the principal Stanitza.

The mode of life of the Cossacks is so rough and simple, that a traveller whose taste is spoiled, does not remain long with them. Fish from the Don are considered dainties: grits prepared with oil, herb-soups, coarse bread, and melons form the usual fare.

One must be familiar with the language and customs of the country, to become acquainted with the inner life of the people, and to obtain more poetical conceptions than those of a correspondent of the "Augsburg Gazette," who has given no other result of his intercourse with the Cossack women, than that "they ply the dung-fork, and drag knights-errant from the mire."

Although the life of the Cossacks has become quite a different thing under Russian domination, and exhibits fewer poetical features than that of their free forefathers, there remains among them, nevertheless, a certain traditional poetry, which richly rewards the student.

I shall here give, as an example, a rather ancient song, which appears to me best suited, in matter and form, to afford a conception of the peculiarities of the popular poetry of the Don.

“Hail to thee, Father dear! glorious, tranquil Don!
Our Nourisher thou, Don Ivanovitch!
To thy fame many stories here are told,
Many stories are told to glorify thee.
In the old days how wildly thy waters rolled,
How wildly they rolled, yet how bright and clear;—
But, my Nourisher! now so troubled thou flowest,
Thou art troubled and dark above and beneath!—
Spoke in answer the glorious, tranquil Don:
But how shall I not troubled, not gloomy be!
I have suffered my bright Falcons all to go,
My bright Falcons all, the Cossacks of the Don!
Laves itself without them, my lone shoreland
Scatters down without them much yellow sand.”

Stimulated by such productions of the olden

time, as well as by his changeful life, the Cossack of to-day feels likewise the need of giving vent to his feelings in verse ; when he parts from his beloved, when he leaves his home, and on other such grief-attuned occasions.

One sings a song, another improves it, a third adds a verse or two, until at last it comes forth well rounded and complete.

What traveller was ever in a position to give a more faithful, more vividly pictured description of the round-dance, which the fresh Cossack maidens, in the evening, when the labour of the day is ended, lead up on the banks of their "native" Don, than is found in the following popular song, whose verses at the same time repeat the whole music of the dance :

"To the stream-side, see, fair maidens are wending,
In the gay-coloured dance-ring there they are blending,
And a young maid goes tripping and glancing aye,
Round and round in her home-taught dancing way :
Now her arms she doth plant—doth her knees bend
now,
With her little feet stamp, with her pretty head bow ;
And the grass she doth tread newly graces itself,
As if eagerly longing, shy raises itself,

And the flowerets sweet, with wary een,
Raise up emulous, too, their fairy mien
Ever dances the Beauty, turning and swinging,
Round the one dance the others, all circling and singing."

* * * * *

Before I reached Novo-Tsherkask, I had a quiet adventure in reserve, which will never be effaced from my memory.

I had been travelling the whole of the night, and on the following day had eaten nothing but a piece of black bread, and tired and hungry, came with the declining eve to a stanitza, whose external appearance was anything but inviting.

In the midst of beautiful scenery the traveller may often forget eating and drinking for days together, in the constant change of views that unroll before his eye. It is as if there were something satisfying in the fresh mountain air, and in the fragrance of green meadows and forests, or as if the stomach shared in the enjoyment of the body.

But in desolate flat tracts, like the endless steppes of the Don, the necessities of our mortal part make themselves doubly apparent. One hears nothing but the rattling of the carriage and the stamping of the horses; one sees nothing but wide,

waste flats. If in addition to these there are bad weather and bad roads, such as had been my experience all day long, one might almost perish with loathing and depression.

In this state of mind I came to the stanitza. Our carriage stopped in the middle of the village, and I sent out my servant to reconnoitre the place, with a view to lodging and a warm repast.

"There is no house of entertainment in this village, and you will find it difficult to get anything to eat," cried a friendly, middle-aged woman to me from the open window of her cottage, "but if you will come and make yourself at home with our simple fare, you shall be welcome; we are just at supper."

She said this in a tone so friendly and inviting, and her face had so kind and good-natured an expression, that I instinctively thought to myself that cannot possibly be an ordinary Cossack woman; she has none of that defiant, determined expression, which is peculiar to the wives of the Don Cossacks.

And following her invitation, I stepped into the house. At a white deal table sat a boy of about fourteen, and three girls the eldest of whom might

be perhaps twelve years old. They all rose when I entered the room, greeted me with friendly modesty, and would not sit down again, until I had taken my place among them.

On the table the evening meal, consisting of herb-soup and grits, steamed invitingly.

The dwelling-room, the house, and table-furniture, all indicated great poverty, but were kept so bright and clean, that the eye lingered about them willingly. The ceiling and walls were painted white, and the doors and windows washed clean. On an old little press stood the poor, but brightly-scoured kitchen utensils, and in the corner hung an image of the Virgin with a little lamp burning before it.

There was something so unaffected in the pleasant look and manner of the good woman, as she offered me her frugal repast and filled my plate, that her kindness could not be mistaken for the usual behaviour of women of this class. I saw by her eyes that she gave gladly what she had, and she seemed to observe with delight, that I was relishing the soup to my heart's content.

During the meal and afterwards, I conversed as

well as I could with my friendly hostess, and soon became possessed of her whole history.

She was born in the government of Pultava, but had been compelled in early childhood to go with her father, an officer of distinguished family, into Siberia. Her father died in his banishment, and a benevolent woman took the orphan child under her care. She shared for several years the home of this good woman, received from her some degree of education and instruction, and afterwards married a Chorundshi,* whom she followed in her twentieth year to the neighbourhood of his native Don.

For a long time she lived here in happiness and contentment, until her husband was snatched away by death. Since then she had maintained a continual struggle with want and misfortune, and had found her only consolation in her children, to whose support and education all her powers were devoted.

"The children already read very prettily," said she, "only I have always so little time to spend

* The lowest rank of officers among the Cossacks.

with them. Sasha,* just fetch your book, and read something to the gentleman."

I looked at the book and was not a little astonished on finding it to be a Russian translation of the second volume of Campe's "Tales for Youth."

The children all read something to me in turn, and really did it very prettily, as their mother had said. Meanwhile the horses had been put to an hour since—time was pressing—I could stay no longer.

I kissed the children affectionately, and took a hearty leave of their mother, managing, as I did so, to slip a piece of money into her hand.

But without seeing what it was, she returned it to me with the words: "Your money I do not like!" and at the same time gave me a look that pierced my soul.

I comprehended in an instant what a mistake I had made, and used all the eloquence I possessed to make atonement for my fault; but faults of this kind are unfortunately not to be atoned for. This

* Diminutive of Alexander.

is the curse of poverty, that all its actions, however disinterested they may be, are ascribed to base selfishness.

"O God!" said the good woman, "can I then not share for once my piece of bread with a stranger, without being suspected of doing it for money? I have been so delighted to have you with us, and now must it come to this!"

Novo-Tsherkask, the principal stanitza of the Don Cossacks, outspreads itself picturesquely over the verdant slopes of a high and swelling range of hills.

I call the place a stanitza, notwithstanding its considerable extent, because the whole of it has too village-like an appearance to deserve the name of town.

The crooked unpaved streets, the little houses scattered about in such motley groups, the picturesque costume of the inhabitants, give to the place quite an oriental cast, which is only broken here and there by some crown-buildings and palaces built in the European taste.

The chief excellencies of Novo-Tsherkask are its good wine and pretty women. So many slen-

derly formed girls, with easy gait and fine countenances, I have never seen in any Russian town as here.

Yet we may not tarry long in the hill-overlying stanitza, and must descend again into the plain; for still the way is long, through which our pilgrimage lies, to the blooming fields of Georgia.

The sky threatening anew with rain, I doubled the Jämshtshick's drink-money, that we might reach as soon as possible Stavropol, the principal town of Ciscaucasia.

The Kalmüks, nomadizing here in the summer between the Don and the Bolshoi Osero,* had already struck their tents, and removed their winter habitations into Ciscaucasia.

I gave orders to stop at a Kalmük village for breakfast, but lost all appetite even before I entered one of the damp, rude, and hurriedly-thrown-up huts, where men and cattle live together, with no other distinction than that the former are more filthy.

* i. e. "The Great Sea." This sea is also called Osero Manytsh, from the River Manytsh.

Notwithstanding this, after I had once crossed the threshold of the hut, I could not forbear exercising my self-command so far as to accept of a mug of milk that was offered to me.

I gave the Kalmük, who had waited on me, a Tshetvertak,* which he evidently regarded with greater satisfaction than I his dirty hands. By signs and broken Russian, he gave me to understand, that if I would wait a moment in the hut, he would soon come back, and bring something particular. Whereupon he went out with hasty strides.

"As the black henbane, that luxuriates along the banks of the Don, among herbs, so are the Kalmüks among the dwellers of the steppe." Such and similar thoughts were passing through my head, when, after a short absence, my host returned, followed by an elderly, but somewhat cleaner-looking man, who spread before me a carefully-folded cloth, containing a variety of little images and carved works.

They were figures of men and animals, whose

* A silver coin of twenty-five kopeks. (A kopek is the hundredth part of a ruble.—Tr.)

design discovered no particular degree of taste, but whose execution showed a skill in art, which I had never expected among these nomade races. Some cows, cut with great exactness from wood, were the work of the old man himself, but the other images were the production of his brother, who, I was informed, procured the colours for painting them from Novo-Tsherkask.

I was glad to have found among these rude wandering races one trace at least of creative mind, and having purchased several of the images at a reasonable rate, betook myself again to my journey, in order to gain the stanitza Donskaja before the approaching evening.

Here I remained for the night, the master of the post-horses being unwilling to supply me, because, as he said, the way was rendered unsafe by the plundering Naigaizers, who roved about the country at night.

The similarity in dress and manners between the Caucasian Cossacks and the hostile inhabitants of the mountains is such that only a practised eye can distinguish the one from the other; and the traveller who is going this way for the

first time, thinks he is already in the midst of Circassians, when he sees the stately Cossacks of the Line themselves, in their fur caps and Caucasian war coats, galloping by.

I left Donskaja at break of day, and at noon had already reached Stavropol, the principal town of the Ciscaucasian provinces.

Little, insignificant houses, crooked, dirty, unpaved streets, inhabited by Russian Grey-coats, peaceable Circassians, Cossacks, Persians and Tartars, are all I recollect of this place, which, previously a miserable village, was in the year 1785 raised to the rank of a town, of which however it still has nothing but the name.

Beyond Stavropol the country soon begins to wear a warlike aspect. On the hills which shut in both sides of the way, watch-fires burn, closely surrounded by Cossacks of the line, who with their shaggy Burka* over their blue war-coat make quite a stately figure; detachments of cavalry patrol the highways; and here and there may

* Burka—a short fur-mantle with the rough side turned outwards,

be descried a Vuishka, *i. e.* a lofty scaffolding, like a dove-cot, in the top of which stand two Cossacks, furnished with telescopes, and looking out in all directions, to give immediate alarm of hostile surprises.

But the keenest eye and the best glass are unavailing in murky weather, even at a trifling distance to distinguish a Cossack of the Line from a Circassian; and unless travellers have a strong escort with them, they are only allowed to proceed on their journey under a perfectly serene sky. For this reason I was obliged to remain two days at Stavropol, before I received permission to continue my journey.

It was a bright, but damp, cold morning when I bade farewell to the principal town of Ciscaucasia.

In the course of the first hour we fell in with a multitude of Cossacks on horseback, some apart, some in small divisions; but the more the daylight increased, the stiller the road became. Not far from Staro-Marjévska, about thirty versts from Stavropol, lay four Cossacks, by the half-expiring watch-fire, stretched upon their burkas in deep sleep. A patrol rode past; the horsemen laughed at the sight

of their sleeping comrades, but trotted on without disturbing their repose.

An hour elapsed before I saw another patrol.

Scarcely two minutes had fled since the horsemen disappeared behind us, when the distant note of bells announced the approach of a Courier-Troika.

The silvery tone of the little bells of Valdai, so pleasing to the ears of a Russian coachman, had its effect on my Jämshtshick, and urged him to greater speed. He hummed a merry curse through his teeth, and clicked his horses cheerily on.

Already we could clearly discern the three-yoked team and hear it blustering from afar, and the silvery tone of the little bells became clearer and clearer. Suddenly a loud, shrill, long-drawn whistle strikes our ear ; we look about : half way between us and the Troika, starts up a tall figure and sounds again, this time in three short blasts, a shrill far-echoing whistle.

The Jämshtshick held in his horses with all his might, and stood up to get a full view around him. But he quickly sat down again, and turned his horses aside ; for as if struck out of the ground, three horsemen appear on the high road, and spring into a

full gallop to meet the Troika, now scarcely fifty paces off. A shot gleams—the coachman tumbles from his box ; at the same instant two other horsemen appear, each leading by the reins a saddled horse as well. With lightning-speed the two persons sitting in the Telega are bound, flung on the saddled horses, and swift as the storm that sweeps over the steppe, the horsemen gallop off with their prisoners in the direction of the Kuban, whence they came.

CHAPTER III.

OVER CAUCASUS TO TIFLIS.

ATASHNIKOV, a Cossack officer noted for his audacious bravery, had been insulted by a person of rank, and swore to revenge himself on the Russians.

The year 1844 was fixed upon for a destructive campaign against the mountaineers. Immense forces were levied from Russia, new commanders appointed, new dispositions made.

Atashnikov knew that Glebov, one of the adjutants of the Commander-in-chief Von Neidhart, was chosen to bring the new plan of operations from Tiflis to Petersburg.

Accordingly he devised the scheme of intercepting the courier with his despatches, and delivering him into the hands of the Circassians, from whom he might be sure of a splendid recompense.

He rides into the hostile camp and soon succeeds in effecting a mutual understanding between himself and the Circassian chiefs. Six horsemen are sent with him to watch his proceedings, to assist him in his exploit, or in case of treachery to shoot him dead.

We have seen how fortune favoured his attempt, the execution of which was designedly laid in a place which otherwise passed for one of the least dangerous in the Caucasus.

It was only after several months of hard confinement, that Glebov and his servant, on payment of a ransom of about two thousand dollars, were set at liberty. I afterwards became acquainted with him at Tiflis, and received from his own mouth the particulars just related.

This is the same Glebov who was second in the unfortunate duel in the Caucasus, in which Lermontov was killed.

He met with his own death when scarcely twenty years old, at the storming of Dargo, under Prince Voronzov.

* * * * *

Behind us lies the steppe, and before us uprises Caucasus.

How the heart is elated with mountains, how the eye becomes clearer at the sight of their dazzling summits ! From where the Kuban rolls his slimy waters and attendant streams into the malignant Pontus, to where the Fire-temples tower by the Caspian Sea, runs, wildly jagged and hugely cleft, the lofty wall of mountains that separates Europe from Asia.

Out of the fresh, exuberant world of verdure at their feet ; out of the dark green, that here, like a broad girdle, decorates their flanks—there, in beds of grass capriciously rent, creeps right on to the monstrous rocky masses above ; the mountains rise aloft in naked beauty, to where the sparry winter-veil falls down, in blinding whiteness, from their heaven-aspiring peaks, upon their mighty shoulders.

High above these marvellously tinted, shimmering

masses, Kasbék to the left, Elboruz to the right, and, at an equal distance from both, the pyramidal Passmymtha, lift their white heads into the blue sky.

No European mountain-chain presents in its entireness so overpoweringly beautiful a spectacle, as Caucasus when it first reveals itself to the wanderer approaching from the steppe.

Here there is no interposing passage, no disturbing and precursory range, to obstruct the view of the mighty whole.

Either the sky is grey with clouds, thick mists forestop the peering eye, and one fancies he is still in the midst of the steppe—or the veil of clouds is rent, the mist falls down, and the mountain-range stands there in all its glory.

So I saw it for the first time at Jekaterinograd, a Cossack town, founded in the reign of Catherine II., and situated close on Kabardah, where the way that leads us hence from Russia, divides into two branches, one of which runs on to the Caspian Sea, whilst the other winds away at a giddy height through the midst of Caucasus, and then descends into the heart of Georgia.

We follow the latter way, and meeting the course of the Terek, which here separates Great from Little Kabardah, pass over Vladikavkas, by a toilsome, crooked route, that leads us to the ridge of the mountains.

Between high-uptowering walls of limestone and wildly shivered slate-rocks ; along the brink of dreadful abysses, where monstrous masses of Protogyn burst from the black agglomerate of slate ; then through the pass of Darjel, famed of old, we reach the village Kasbék, after having taken fresh horses at Lars for the last time. Now the way was obstructed by enormous masses of snow, now by loosened blocks of granite and rolling stones, sometimes by an unwieldy Osset vehicle, and at others by a caravan of camels soberly striding on, whose tough desert nature seems also able to endure, without finching, the icy mountain-paths of Caucasus.

The village Kasbék, called also by the Georgians Stepan Tzminda, lies at the foot of the mountain-giant whose name it bears, and whose head forms the highest point of the volcanic chain that traverses Caucasus from the north-east to the south-west.

Stiff and worn out by the toilsome journey which, on account of the difficulty of the way, I had performed from Lars to Stepan Tzmindia almost entirely on foot, I came with the evening into the village.

But not long did I tolerate the damp rooms of my lodging. After a short refreshment, I hastened out again into the open air, and notwithstanding the piercing cold, spent half the night beneath the clear sky, lost in the vision of magnificent scenes, that unrolled before me in the brilliant moonlight.

The sudden passage from the steppes to the mountains, the strong impressions of the day, the historical associations involuntarily rising, the thought that I was now strolling in the midst of Caucasus so famed of old, which some have called the cradle of the human race, and others the wall over which the billows of people broke, that out of Central Asia once poured down upon Europe—all this had roused me so mightily, that I embraced the new world around me with double intenseness.

Before me uprose in awful beauty the gigantic Kasbék, the mountain sanctified by tradition and

celebrated in song; from whose summits periodically every six or seven years, the accumulated masses of ice and snow rush down in terrific avalanches, overwhelming men and villages in their fall.

Towards two seas he outstretches his arms; on two parts of the world look his far-glancing eyes; and the lands of the Ossets, of the Kisti, of the Galgai, encircle his feet.

I find the impressions, which that glorious night made upon me, noted down in my journal in verse and rhyme, and must be pardoned if I repeat a portion of them here, as the immediate expression of the sensations which the world of mountains created in me.

K A S B É K.

On Kasbék I stood and pondered,
Late in moon-adornèd night,
Higher still in vision wandered
Up the mountain's pomp of height.

Saw the wind pursue the brooding
Clouds from icy naked steepes,
Saw the massy rocks protruding
O'er the mountain's silent deeps.

Saw the Terek wildly rushing
Downwards with a foaming tongue—
And astonished and o'ergushing
With emotion, spoke in song :

" Like the stars, O mountain grey!
Thou dost sun thy head in gladness,
Far from noise of earth away,
Far away from care and sadness.

" See the latest sunbeam lights thee,
And the earliest sunbeam's gold,
And alone upon thy heights the
Eagle plants his talon bold.

" Treasures fill thy caverns under,
Spirits wait upon thy might,
There thou standest, pomp of wonder,
Glorious in the rich moonlight !

" Spangled robe of jewels deck thee,
Diamond is thy lustrous crown,
Proud thou lovest—what else recks he—
Terek, thy rejoicing son !

“Wavy-pinioned, vale-entwining,
Flows he ever near and far,
Thee with brother Ocean joining,
That thou ne’er, that thee ne’er saw !

“Earth, at thy head’s gentle shaking,
Groans beneath in dire dismay,
Huge rocks to and fro are quaking,
Tears the avalanche away ;

“Till resistless, all-controlling,
It from mountain, mountain springs,
And along its terror-rolling,
Woeful track, destruction brings.”

And I ceased. An awful trembling
Seized me in that night of fear ;
Stretched Kasbék his shadow-sembling
Arms far out, and drew me near.

Spirit-like the moonbeam playeth,
With the sparkling snowy shimmer . . .
List ! ’tis like a voice that strayeth
Down the mountain through the glimmer :

" Little man ! with little cares,
Great unrest and thoughts that sadden,
Whom the snow that girds me scares,
Whom my gliding glaciers madden.

" Homeward wend thy tranquil paces,
Through the valley's verdant dell,
Brighter than of me thy praises,
Are the things of thee I tell !

" Ye rejoice with joy together,
Bear together grief and pain—
Cold and lonely, friended never,
I 'twixt heaven and earth remain.

" Cold and lonely must remain,
Others and myself despoiling,
Must behold the ages wane,
And myself ne'er cease from toiling !

" Yea, the sunlight first adorns me,
Lingers latest round me gleaming,
Only never feeds and warms me,
Me alone, its milky beaming !

" Glad I hear the varied story
Of the fair world and of ye,
But must dwell in distant glory,
For what pleases flies from me.

" Nay, the stream, which I engender,
See, he lifts his water-wings,
From me flies in rushing splendour,
Down into the vale he springs !

" And sometimes fierce discontentment
Seizés on me with the strictness
Of the fate, whose fixed resentment
Binds me fast in icy thickness-

" Then I shake my lusty shoulders,
Rend my mailèd coat of snows,
Sling down ice and broken boulders
To the valley's green repose.

" Roll the avalanches roaring
Down their path of terror-speed,
Over ruined houses pouring,
Rolling over thousands dead.

“ Meanwhile I, in naked glory,
 Drink deep joy with ardent zest,
 Recreate my hale and hoary
 Age from Heaven’s glowing breast . . . ”

Thus Kasbék, the mighty, spoke .
 To me, wrapped in deepest musing ;
 Sound of sprightly torrent broke
 O’er the solemn night diffusing.

From the glaciers ever dashing,
 Darkening in its rush and swell,
 And in ever louder splashing,
 Foaming to my feet it fell

Silent seeking thence to sever,
 Strange emotions through me streamed—
 Beauteous Terek ! I have never
 Thee a child of sorrow deemed !

• • • • •

THE TEREK.

Like a brilliant fancy that doth from the head
 Of a Genius flashing beam,
 So springs out of mighty Kasbék’s rocky bed
 The boisterous Terek-stream ;

Bubbling it tears from its rest,
In the nourishing mountain's breast;
Rushing, and sparkling, and splashing,
Over the glaciers dashing—
And the stones and the rocks that daringly ruffle
The crest of his waters in foamy scuffle,
Laughing, oversprings he them,
Or with strong hand swings he them,
Down with himself to the blooming dell.
What encounters him must be shivered,
For Heaven to him his might delivered!

The goat, who, like him, from the rock down leaps,
Delighteth herself in his wavy gleam;
The wanderer, who leans o'er the mountain-steeps,
Refreshes himself in his cooling stream.

Rejoice them the gay-coloured flowers, the scented,
With the fresh, dancing water-flood ever contented;
And the trees that he laves in fond salutation,
Nod to him back in mute gratulation.

By him, downward directed,
The vale's intersected—
A king in his jewels of wavy sheen—
To man giving joy, to the landscape its green.
Nothing hinders his run,
Like a tempest begun,

Without rest, without sleep,
He hastes on to the deep—
And the sea in the roar of its wild jubilee,
Receiveth him home in its mansion free.

And when he in the main
His roving hath ended,
One tells not again
From whence he descended ;
Nor knows him from others,
The streams of his brothers,
Who, like him, from the mountains hither have tended.
His name flies away—
An empty scroll—
He himself lives aye,
A part in the whole.

After these poetical effusions, I dare not venture to expect my friendly reader to accompany me through the snow-storms, filth, cold, heat, and all the obstacles and dangers, which I had to encounter in my further passage over Caucasus.

Only a few words, therefore, to conclude the journey !

We pursue our toilsome march to Kobi ; then

wind along between close, steep walls of rock ; right across frightful abysses, which on Guda and Kreuzberg open before us of a depth that makes us shudder to look down ; ascend over Kashaour to Quishett ; come down upon the laughing valley of the Aragua ; and before evening is yet set in, reach Dushett, at the foot of Caucasus, the first Georgian town.

Behind us lies the mountain-range, in its icy pomp, with its glaciers, abysses, rock-walls, and ravines ; and before us lies a blooming land, diversified with gently sloping, green hill-chains, and gamboled over by the Aragua's loud-splashing waters.

Snow yet clings to the boots with which we tread upon the flowers that bloom around our feet.

The wind murmurs softly through the foliage of the acacias ; the vine upcurls in gigantic thickness and height ; on the twigs of the almond-tree the songstresses of the wood are swinging to and fro ; out of the rigid winter-landscape we have entered into a garden where all is redolent and glowing of flowers and sunshine.

At Mtzchethi, where the Aragua mingles its waters with those of the Kyros, we make our last halt, and in a few hours thereafter reach Tiflis, the capital of Georgia.

again; and when I could no longer resist the inroads of sleep, I left the company in order to retire to my dwelling.

It was only when I rose to depart that I felt the full influence of the wine, and this in my legs more than in my head; for the Kachetish wine has the peculiarity of never producing headache, whereas it oppresses the lower part of the body with singular heaviness. I certainly should never have reached my destination, had not some of the gentlemen taken me under their friendly care, and led me through the unpaved, dog-howling streets of Tiflis, in safety to my dwelling.

It was a moonlight, fragrant night; one of those magical nights that are only to be seen under a Georgian sky, where the moon shines so clear, its lustre seems more like a sunlight softened down by some mystic, fairy-woven veil.

The long walk through the cool night air had somewhat refreshed and revived me; with ineffable alluringness did the stars twinkle down from the crystal sky; in the distance the crescent-shaped summit of Kasbék rose upwards like a spirit into the night; deep lay the city beneath me in legend-

ary beauty ; and between them the Kyros rolled his glancing waves.

A strong temptation offered itself to me of enjoying the lovely landscape before my windows for a moment longer ; a door led out of my chamber to a high gallery running round the house. I had not observed that the gallery, quite a new erection, was only partially completed, whilst in several places the boards lay unjoined and unfastened on the beams that formed the basis of the superstructure. After considerable exertion I opened the door leading to the gallery—the verses of Pushkin were humming in my head :

“ On Grusia’s* hill-tops nightly darkness lies,
Before me Kyros’ waves are foaming,” &c.

I stepped out, the board on which I trod tottered beneath my feet—a shock—a shriek—and bleeding and moaning, I lay in the court below.

Of the immediate consequences of this fall, which had nearly cost me my life, I will be silent ; for to

* Grusia—so the Russians call Georgia.

keep a journal of one's sufferings is to suffer doubly. Suffice it to say that I was dangerously injured in several parts of my body, and that it required a painful cure and careful nursing, before I was again sufficiently recovered to divert myself with reading and study.

My first object in Georgia was to secure an instructor in Tartar, that I might learn as quickly as possible a language so indispensably necessary in the countries of the Caucasus.

Accident favoured my choice, for my learned teacher Mirza-Schaffy, the Wise Man of Gjändsha,* as he styles himself, is, according to his own opinion, the wisest withal of men.

Properly, with the modesty peculiar to his nation, he only calls himself the first wise man of the East; but as, according to his estimation, the children of the West are yet living in darkness and unbelief, it is a matter of course with him that he soars above us in wisdom and knowledge. Moreover he indulges the hope, that, thanks to his endeavours, the illumination and wisdom of the

* Gjändsha—a town in the province of Karabagh.

East will also in the progress of years, actually spread amongst us. I am already the fifth scholar, he tells me, who has made a pilgrimage to him, for the purpose of participating in his instructions. He argues from this that the need of travelling to Tiflis and listening to Mirza-Schaffy's sayings of wisdom is ever becoming more vividly felt by us. My four predecessors, he is further of opinion, have since their return into the West, promoted, to the best of their ability, the extension of oriental civilization amongst their races. But of me he formed quite peculiar hopes; very likely because I paid him a silver ruble for each lesson; which I understand is an unusually high premium for the Wise Man of Gjändsha.

It was always most incomprehensible to him, how *we* can call ourselves wise or learned, and travel over the world with these titles, before we even understand the sacred languages. Nevertheless he very readily excused these pretensions in me, inasmuch as I was at least ardently endeavouring to acquire these languages, but above all because I had made the lucky hit of choosing him for my teacher.

The advantages of this lucky hit he had his own peculiar way of making intelligible to me. "I, Mirza-Schaffy," said he, "am the first wise man of the East! consequently thou, as my disciple, art the second. But thou must not misunderstand me; I have a friend. Omar-Effendi, a very wise man, who is certainly not the third among the learned of the land.

"If I were not alive, and Omar-Effendi were thy teacher, then he would be the first, and thou, as his disciple, the second wise man!" After such an effusion, it was always the custom of Mirza-Schaffy to point with his forefinger to his forehead, at the same time giving me a sly look, whereupon, according to rule, I nodded knowingly to him in mute reciprocation.

That the Wise Man of Gjändsha knew how to render his vast superiority in the highest degree palpable to any one who might have any misgiving on the point, he once showed me by a striking example.

Among the many learned rivals who envied the lessons of Mirza-Schaffy, the most conspicuous was Mirza-Jussuf, the Wise Man of Bagdad. He named

himself after this city, because he had there pursued his studies in Arabic ; from which he inferred that he must possess more profound accomplishments than Mirza-Schaffy, whom he told me he considered a Jschekj, an ass among the bearers of wisdom "The fellow cannot even write decently," Jussuf informed me of my reverend Mirza, "and he cannot sing at all ! Now I ask thee : What is knowledge without writing ? What is wisdom without song ? What is Mirza-Schaffy in comparison with me ?"

In this way he was continually plying me with perorations of confounding force, wherein he gave especial prominence to the beauty of his name Jussuf, which Moses of old had celebrated, and Hafiz sung of in lovely strains ; he exerted all his acuteness to evince to me that a name is not an empty sound, but that the significance attached to a great or beautiful name is inherited in more or less distinction by the latest bearers of this name. He, Jussuf, for example, was a perfect model of the Jussuf of the land of Egypt, who walked in chastity before Potiphar, and in wisdom before the Lord.

On one of these occasions, as he was about to furnish me with new proofs of his excellence, a

measured clatter of slippers in the ante-room announced the arrival of my reverend teacher. He left the high slippers behind at the door according to the custom of the country, and with neat stockings worked of various colours, stepped into the room.

He appeared to comprehend the cause of my visitor's presence, for with a contemptuous glance, at which Jussuf suddenly became quite timid, he surveyed the latter from head to foot, and was about to give expression to his feelings, when I interrupted him with the words :

“ Mirza-Schaffy, Wise Man of Gjändsha, what have my ears heard ! Thou undertakest to teach me, and canst neither write nor sing ; thou art a Jschekj among the bearers of wisdom,—so says Mirza-Jussuf, the Wise Man of Bagdad ! ”

The indignation of Mirza-Schaffy's countenance acquired by degrees an expression of perfect scorn ; he clapped his hands—a sign at which my servant usually brought him a fresh pipe ; but this time Mirza-Schaffy asked for his thick-soled slippers. His request being immediately obeyed, he took one of them, and with it so unmercifully belaboured

the Wise Man of Bagdad, that the latter vainly sought to avoid his punishment by the most suppliant actions and entreaties. Mirza-Schaffy was inexorable.

“What,—thou wilt be wiser than I? I cannot sing, dost thou say? Wait,—I will make music for thee? And I cannot write either? Thy head shall answer for it!”

And a blow on the head followed the word. Wimpering and wailing, the Wise Man of Bagdad staggered beneath the strokes of the Wise Man of Gjändsha, and stumbled through the ante-room, and down the staircase.

From the contest of wisdom, which he had conducted to so triumphant an issue, Mirza-Schaffy turned away in greater tranquillity than I had expected. He exhorted me to continue faithfully under his instruction, and to lend no ear to such false teachers as Jussuf and his fellows.

“There will more of them come yet,” he continued, “but thou must turn thy face away from them, for thou art wiser than they all. What says the Poet: ‘He who cannot read would become Grand Vizier!’ So it is with these people, who

“ Mullah ! wine is pure,
To revile it's a sin—
Should'st thou censure my word,
May'st thou see truth therein !

“ No devotion has me
To the mosque led to pray ;
But drunken and free
I have erred from the way !”

Glass followed glass, and song song ; but all at once, to my astonishment, the eye of the Mirza grew dim ; he fell into a reverie, and stared sadly before him. He sat so for a long while, and I did not venture to disturb his silent contemplation. It was only when again he opened his mouth, and sang these words in a plaintive tone :

“ Oh, me ! my heart Love's anguish has riven,
Ask not : for whom ?
To me the pain of parting was given,
Ask not : by whom ?”

that I interrupted him with the sympathizing question :

“ Art thou in love, Mirza-Schaffy ?”

He looked at me, sorrowfully shaking his head ;
and then began to sing another song, I think of
Hafiz :

“ Art thou treading Love’s pathway, the sad and unending,
Hoping only in Death, in the all-comprehending !” &c.

He hummed the song through, and then turned
to me, and said :

“ No, I am not in love now, but I was in love
once, as never man has been !”

You may think I did my utmost to draw
out the secret of my reverend Mirza’s love. We
sat together far on into the deep night, and with
ever-growing curiosity did my ear hang upon his
lips.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WISE MAN OF GJÄNDSHA'S FIRST LOVE.

"It is now eleven years," said Mirza-Schaffy, beginning his narration, "since I saw for the first time Zuléikha, the daughter of Ibrahim, the Chan of Gjändsha.

"What shall I tell thee of her beauty? Shall I speak of her eyes, which, darker than the night, yet shone brighter than all the stars of heaven? Shall I tell thee of the gracefulness of her shape, of the loveliness of her hands and feet, of her soft hair that flowed down long as Eternity, and of her mouth whose breath was sweeter than the fragrance of the roses of Shiraz!

"What avails all speech? thou wouldst never

understand me, for man cannot comprehend the superhuman.

“For more than six months I had daily watched her, when she sat at mid-day with her companions on the roof of the house, or at eventide when her slaves danced before her in the moonlight. But I had not yet spoken a word to her, nor did I know whether she had ever thought me worthy of a glance. How could I venture to approach her? Can man also approach the sun? What can he do but rejoice in the splendour of his countenance?

“By day I was always obliged to proceed with great caution, for had Ibrahim Chan observed me casting loving looks at his daughter, my life would have been in danger. But in the evening I was securer in my concealment, for after eight o'clock Ibrahim Chan never set his foot over the threshold, or on the roof of his house. Then burst the flames of my heart into song; now I repeated a Ghazel of Hafiz, and now of Firduzi:

“ ‘ O gentle wind! blow sweetly whither,
Whither thou know'st—
And that sweet word of love take thither,
The word thou know'st!

“ ‘The answer, if my hope ’twould wither,
Let it be lost—
But if ’twould gladden, bring it hither,
Whate’er thou know’st !’

“But most frequently I sang my own songs. What need has Mirza-Schaffy to adorn himself with borrowed adornment ? Whose voice is clearer than my voice, and whose songs are more beautiful than my songs ?

“And after long hope, at last it happened that the eye of that lady turned on me.

“Ibrahim Chan went out on an expedition to Tiflis to fight with the host of the Sardaar against the enemies of Moscow. I ventured therefore to make myself heard and seen more freely ; my voice and shape could not longer remain unnoticed by Zuléikha.

“One dark evening, when I had stood two long hours through in vain, waiting and singing in my concealment, without desecring a single female creature on Ibrahim’s roof, I was just on the point of slinking back discouraged to my house, when a figure veiled in white walked past me with a

light step, and said: 'Follow me, Mirza-Schaffy, and mark whither I go.'

"My heart beat high in trembling expectation. Baschem üsta! On my head let it come! thought I, and followed, with careful step, the white figure floating at a short distance before me.

"To the right from the solitary street through which we passed, there was a path leading to the mountains, which was covered by medlar-shrubs and oleander-bushes, and on account of its narrowness impassable for beasts of burden and caravans. Thither we directed our way. A secret little spot, that we soon found out, secured us from the curiosity of men. My heart rightly guessed by whom the fair messenger, who led me, was sent.

"I quite thought," said I, interrupting the Mirza, whilst he was again engaged in refreshing his tongue with a glass of wine, "I quite thought it had been Zuléikha herself."

He appeared to hear this remark with displeasure. "Can the sun," he rejoined, "descend to the earth? Could Zuléikha be alone with me, before she had drawn me up to herself? Can the end

come before the beginning, or the day before the rising of the sun?"

He sipped down another glass to compose his feelings, and then continued his narration :

"My mysterious companion first broke the silence: 'I am Fatima,' she said, 'the confidential attendant of Zuléikha. My lady looks on thee with the eye of satisfaction. The sound of thy voice has delighted her ear, and the spirit of thy songs has touched her heart. I am come to thee of my own accord, without the bidding of my lady, to comfort thee, to let thee drink in hope from the fountain of my words, because I wish thee well, and it grieves me to see thee suffer from love to her.'

" 'Has then Zuléikha not closed her ear to the entreaty of the poorest of her slaves?' cried I, intoxicated with joy, reeling with happiness, 'and will my heart not be torn by the thorn of dislike? Allah min! Allah bir! The God of thousands is one God! Great is His goodness, and wonderful are His ways! What have I done that He has thus poured out on me the stream

of His favour through the hand of Zuléikha ; that he has led the fountain of my songs to the sea of Beauty !'

" 'Thou dost well,' said Fatima, 'to praise the favour of Allah, and the charm of my mistress. She is the jewel in the ring of Beauty, she is the pearl in the shell of Fortune. Long since she would have given thee a token of her favour, if her bashfulness and innocence had not been still greater than her beauty. And she is afraid of her father ; who loves his daughter tenderly, but who never would consent that a poor Mirza should aspire to her love. Achmed Chan of Avaria, who now with Ibrahim Chan has joined the host of Moscow, is sueing for Zuléikha's hand ; and her father will give her to him, if he returns home in triumph from the campaign ; therefore we must endeavour that your love attain its wished-for aim before the return of Achmed Chan. Tomorrow evening when the Muezzim of the Minarette shall call to prayer, show thyself at the garden-side of the house ; I will seek to turn Zuléikha's look on thee ; and if thou singest a song that pleases her, then thou mayest be sure of the bud.'

"So spake Fatima, and much more besides ; I have told thee the most important part. I gave her all I had about me that was valuable, my watch and purse, and promised her to write a talisman that would drive away a black speck on her left cheek. We parted with the promise of seeing each other again for further communication."

Mirza-Schaffy interrupted his narrative by a long sigh, and took up again the fresh-filled glass. I availed myself of the short pause, to obtain an explanation of one or two obscure passages of his story.

"What was the meaning of thy words," I asked him, "when thou spakest of the thorn of dislike ; and what signification is connected with the bud, of which Fatima told thee thou mightest be sure ?"

"Art thou so inexperienced," he replied compassionately, "that thou dost not know what expression love has ? How shall a maiden declare her feelings in the presence of a lover, to whom she never speaks a word before he is united with her ?"

And according to his wonted way of giving

me all his teachings in rhymes, in the composition of which my Mirza possesses a dexterity worthy of fable, he began to sing the following :

“ The thorn’s the token of rejection,
Of disapproval and of scorn,
So if she strive against connection,
She sends the token of the thorn.

“ But if a bud the virgin throws me,
A rose-bud to me as a token,
Then that the fates are kind it shows me,
But wait awhile with faith unbroken !

“ But if a chaliced rose she tenders,
An open rose-flower as a token,
The fullest joy she thus engenders,
The maiden’s love is thus outspoken !”

“ I understand,” said I ; “ now proceed with thy story.”

“ On the following evening,” resumed Mirza-Schaffy, “ I appeared at the appointed hour. During the day I had written a minne-song, which none of womankind could resist. I had sung it

over about twenty times to myself, in order to be sure of success. Then I had been into the bath, and had had my head shaved so perfectly, that it might have vied in whiteness with the lilies of the vale of Senghi. The evening was calm and clear; from the garden-side, where I stood, I could distinctly see my Zuléikha; she was alone with Fatima on the roof, and had her veil put a little back, as a sign of her favour. I took courage, and pushed my cap down behind, to show my white head, just fresh-shaved, to the maiden's eyes. Thou canst comprehend what an impression that would make on a woman's heart! Alas! my head was much whiter then than it is now. But that is more than ten years since!" he said sorrowfully, and would have continued in this digression, if I had not interposed the words:

"Thy head is quite white enough now to fascinate the most maidenly heart; but thou hast not yet told me how thou sangest thy minne-song, and what impression it made upon Zuléikha."

"I had folded the song," said the Mirza, "round a double almond kernel, and thrown it on the roof, as a keepsake for the Beauty, before I

began to sing it; and then I began with clear voice :

“ What is the eye of wild gazelle, the slender pine’s unfolding,

Compared with thy delightful eyes, and thine ethereal moulding ?

What is the scent from Shiraz’ fields, windborne that’s hither straying,

Compared with richer scented breath, from thy sweet mouth outplaying ?

What is Ghazel and Rubajat, as Hafiz ere was singing,
Compared with one word’s mellow tone, from thy sweet mouth outwinging ?

What is the rosy chalice flower, where nightingales are quaffing,

Compared with thy sweet rosy mouth, and thy lips’ rosy laughing ?

What is the sun, and what the moon, and all heaven’s constellations ?

Love-glancing far for thee they glow with trembling scintillations !

And what am I myself, my heart, my songful celebration,
But slaves of royal loveliness, bright beauty’s inspiration !”

“ Allah, how beautiful !” I cried. “ Mirza-Schaffy

thy words sound as sweet as the songs of the Peris,
in the world of spirits ! What is Hafiz to thee ?
What is a drop to the ocean ?”

“That was only the beginning—the preparation,”
said the Wise Man of Gjändsha, “the proper minne-
verses come after :

“ With holy truth and modesty
Approach I to Love’s sacred bower,
And throw this fragrant song to thee,
A fragrant question’s opening flower !

“ Take it in joy, or take in scorn,
Give my heart death or delectation—
Throw down to me bud, rose, or thorn,
I wait here for thy declaration !”

“ And what did Zuléikha do ?”

“ She threw me down a rose-bud, smiling, and
for the first time I beheld her countenance in all its
blissful beauty !

“ What says Fizuli ?

“ ‘To come to thee, my Life, life away I did give ;
Be propitious, for through thee first came I to live !’

“So also it was with me. As soon as I knew that Zuléikha loved me, my old life of appearance ceased, and a new real life began. Who shall count the hours, through which I lived in the full enjoyment of the consciousness of her love? who the songs which I sang to her praise? who the steps which I made in order to see her? The sun of fortune seemed to have risen upon me; all earlier obstacles were dispersed by the favour of destiny. Truly my love remained no secret in Gjändsha; but all my acquaintances seemed to have united to serve me, some out of friendship for me, others out of hatred towards Ibrahim Chan.”

“About six weeks might have fled since the blissful day on which Zuléikha threw me the bud, when suddenly a threatening cloud obscured my heaven of fortune.

“Ibrahim Chan returned home from the war, and with him came Achmed Chan, the suitor of his daughter.

“The tidings frightened and animated me, both.

“From the abyss of amazement I was borne as on eagles’ wings up the mountain of hope. I felt that

the crisis of my destiny was at hand, and the thought inspired me with courage. I had but one thing which captivated me to life : if this were lost, the world would have nothing more to offer for the poor Mirza : therefore I resolved to venture all, to gain the one thing, which was my all.

“Already Ahmed Chan had sent a troop of horsemen to Chumsag, the capital of Avaria, to fetch the Käbn—the bridal present—and then immediately to conduct him and his chosen lady home.

“At Gjändsna prize combats and festivities were begun to celebrate the return of the victorious Chans. A singing festival was likewise to take place, by Zuleikha’s wish. All singers of the country were invited, and each was to be prepared with a beautiful song in praise of the lady. Thou knowest that the successful competitor in such a festival is highly extolled, and has the right of breaking to pieces the stringed instruments of all the other singers.

“I knew beforehand that I should surpass them all, for which of them had the source of inspiration that I had ! How can the nightingale sing where no rose blooms ? How can a song be successful

where there is no love? With a sure presentiment of my superiority, I looked for the day of the singing festival as the summit and culmination of my destiny.

"I had taken an Armenian into my secret. Thou knowest the craftiness of the sons of Haïghk! He had to conduct a caravan to Shemacha, in the land of Shirvan, and promised to have a camel ready for me and my Zuléikha, to take us with him, secretly and disguised, in case my plans should fortunately be realized.

"With Fatima all was concerted; she had packed together the most costly things, and taken care that the Armenian should be amply satisfied; for the day of the singing festival was to be the day of our flight.

"At midnight I was to be at the solitary little spot, where I first lay hid with Fatima; from thence we intended to approach, by retired foot-paths, the great street, so as to await in safe concealment the passing by of the caravan.

"The eventful day dawned. Already for a long while I had seemed to myself like a stranger in my own dwelling. Now I stared at the white

walls, with the niches in them, for keeping articles of dress—now I could look hours long with wondering eye, on the loam-hardened, mat-covered floor, or on the curling wire-trellis which they use there instead of windows, as if I had never seen all that before.

“The minutes seemed to me like days, and the hours like years. I rolled about on the couch of impatience, and could not stay for the time that should decide my fate.

“About midday a joyous message arrived. Akim, the Armenian, came to announce to me that Ibrahim Chan was gone out with his guest into the open air, and that all the arm-bearing men of the place were preparing to follow him, in order to share in the pleasure of the prize combat; while the women were left to divert their time at home with the songs of the minstrels.

“Thou shouldst have seen how the roofs were filled with women and maidens! how, round about the place, where the singing festival was celebrated, before Zuléikha’s house, all was flashing with dark eyes and gay-coloured dresses!

“A large carpet was spread out, on which sat

two players of the Sass and Tshengjir, between whom each singer took his place in turn, to sing his song to the sound of the strings.

“The most beautiful boy of Gjändsha was appointed to hold the silver plate, and to present it to the singers, as they seated themselves in turn and stood up.”

“What was the plate for, O Mirza?”

“What a question thou askest! What should a plate be for, but to conceal the expression of the singer’s feelings? Can he show his countenance to the eye of beauty, when he sings how the pains of love torment his heart and blanch his cheek?”

“Twenty singers stood round in a circle, and one after another stepped up before me, for I was obliged to be last, because I was the youngest.

“And if thou askest of me what they sang, I cannot tell thee. I only know that all they scattered from eye and mouth, was like faint sparkles in comparison with the fire of *my* song and of *my* eyes. My own heart swelled with ecstasy at the sound of my words.

“Hear what I sang:—

“ Not with angels through Heaven’s blue that sail,
Not with roses that bloom in odorous vale,
Yea, not with the sun’s eternal light,
Compare I Zulékha, my maiden bright !

“ For the angel’s bosom is void of love,
There are thorns where opens the rose above,
And the sun from the night veils up his light,
They are all unlike my Zulékha bright !

“ To the eye that through the Universe goes,
There is nothing that like my Zulékha shows—
With no thorn in her beautiful love, ever fair,
With her beautiful self she can only compare !

“The song was finished, and—at my feet lay a swelling rose !

“ I was the victor of the festival ! In the joy of my heart, I thought of nothing but Zulékha and myself. I ran home to make preparations for our departure, and quite forgot to break the instruments of the vanquished singers—I was so happy !”

Here Mirza-Schaffy made a long pause, ordered a fresh pipe, and looked fixedly before him, evidently

overcome by the remembrances irrepressibly rising within him. He sat in this manner for perhaps half an hour, sorrowful and silent, inhaling the fumes of his tshibuq in full, deep draughts, and then giving them out again from his mouth in whiffs as long as minutes, so that his whole head was enveloped in a cloud of smoke, above which the high Phrygian cap rose conspicuous, like the top of a steeple.

At last he got up, hummed some unintelligible verses, and made as if he were going. I had the greatest trouble to detain him, in order to hear more of his narration ; but it was only by entreaties and questions of all kinds, that I enticed from him in fragments the rest of his story. I shall give his own words, as far as I can remember them, in a connected order.

“ Our departure was to take place at midnight. The things necessary for our flight were already placed under the care of the Armenian. Zuléikha shared with Fatima her bed-chamber, which was separated from the rest of the women’s apartments by an intermediate room, appropriated for the bath.

"Fatima had undertaken to conduct me at the appointed hour to the chamber of my beloved.

"What amazing fear overcame me! how my heart beat, how all my limbs trembled, as I prepared to take the eventful step!

" 'Mirza-Schaffy,' said I to myself, 'how canst thou venture on so bold a beginning? How shalt thou be able to cross with sinful foot the sharp bridge El-Sirat, which must lead thee into Paradise? What is all the wisdom of the world to the beauty of Zuléikha?'

"Thus and much more was I revolving* within myself, until I came to the place which Fatima had appointed me.

" 'Up, hasten, Mirza,' she said, 'and follow me; already my lady is waiting in bridal readiness in her chamber.'

"I followed the agile Fatima with uncertain footsteps. Unobserved we reached the shell of beauty's pearl, the chamber of Zuléikha.

"There she sat, modestly veiled, with her young limbs enveloped in a dazzling white Tshadra,*

* Tshadra—a white over-dress, covering the whole body.

delightful as a Peri from Dshinnistan.* My words cleaved to my tongue, as I stood before the charming maiden and adored her.

“‘There is no time to stand astonished,” said the wise Fatima, ‘we must haste to escape, lest we be surprised by the servants of the house. Take the hand of the lady, and beg her to follow thee whither Allah directs thy steps.’

“I did as she enjoined me, but with a loud cry, Zuléikha shrank back, as I clasped her hand. And again the prudent Fatima interposed:

“‘Who doubts of the splendour of the sun? who doubts of the fragrance of the rose? who doubts of thy maidenliness? Leave then now the struggle of love, sweet lady, and follow without lamentation him whom Allah has sent thee!’”

Here, before I let Mirza-Schaffy proceed with his narration, I must insert an explanatory word or two, for the proper understanding of the above passage. With the Moslem of the Caucasus, it is customary that the bride, even when the union is sanctioned by the parents, should be led away by

* Dshinnistan—the World of Spirits.

the bridegroom with violence. The more she resists, strives, cries, and laments, the more maidenly and modest is she considered to be. Sham contests even, not always free from danger, are wont to take place between the relatives of the bride and the friends of the bridegroom. After this necessary digression, Mirza-Schaffy shall complete the story of his flight.

“Only after long imploring did the prudent Fatima succeed in quieting my Zuléikha. Timid and trembling she followed me, as I led her out, by the same secret way I had entered, into the open air. There I committed her to the guidance of Fatima, and followed at some distance. Fortunately we reached the place close by the narrow footpath of the mountains, where I had had my first meeting with Fatima. The pain excited by departure from the threshold of her father’s house, soon gave way to other feelings in the breast of my beloved. * * * * We were safe, we were happy! And never in my life had the sun seemed to me so glorious, as the late-rising moon that night!

* * * * *

“With the break of day we joined the passing caravan, being surprised on our way to it by a confession from Fatima of quite a peculiar nature. She threw herself down at the feet of her mistress, and confessed that she was in love with Akim, the Armenian, our protector. Although Zuléikha at first was greatly indignant that a daughter of Ali should fix her inclinations on an infidel, she soon became appeased, for love easily excuses love, and then the connection of Akim with Fatima, was also a pledge of our own safety. Our danger was now his danger, therefore he would be sure to take care to protect us. Both the ladies covered themselves so closely up in their tshadras, that no one could recognise them. I too had disguised myself in face and dress, and passed for a carpet-dealer of Baku.

“Thus we were moving slowly along the street, in the direction of Kuraktshaïskaja.

“For the first day Akim had taken the cautious measure, of proceeding with the two ladies apart from the caravan, on a side path concealed by a wood. Zuléikha rode on an ass before, and the Armenian with Fatima followed behind on foot.

“Without this cautious arrangement, we had been lost at the very beginning; for in a few hours, a troop of horsemen came galloping up behind us, and in their leader I recognised the audacious Achmed Chan. Fortunately he had never noticed me at Gjändsha, and therefore in my present disguise, I was so much the less afraid of exciting his suspicion. He searched the caravan with a keen, penetrating glance, but as no female was to be seen, he sprang forwards after a short delay, with horrible curses, and galloped on with his train.

“Galling is poverty—but how insupportable does it become, when we learn to measure its whole depth by a treasure that we had found and have lost again.

“What avails it to walk through the gardens of Paradise, when it is but a passage to hell!”

“Thou speakest wisely, O Mirza,” said I, interrupting him, “but what have the sayings of wisdom to do in the story of love? Does not Hafiz say: ‘The Understanding must be silent when Love speaks?’”

Yet my words made no impression on his ear, and I could not in any way urge the otherwise so

loquacious Mirza to the conclusion of his narrative.

“Leave me,” he said, “of what use to me are all words! Whom misfortune will strike, on his head it comes.

“Oh me! my heart love’s anguish has riven,
Ask not, for whom?
To me the pain of parting was given,
Ask not, by whom?”

So he sang in melancholy tone, and without wishing me good night, left the room. But as I cannot think, after I have once excited your curiosity, of stealing off like my reverend teacher, before I have brought you to the conclusion of the story, I will supply the rest, as I have made it out from later communications. A few words will finish it all.

On the third day, the travellers were suddenly overtaken by a frightful thunder-storm, followed by violent and continued torrents of rain. Fortunately, or unfortunately, a village was descried close at hand, and whilst the beasts of burden

were left under the care of the camel-drivers, Mirza-Schaffy and Akim sought for protection for their beloved ones in a Tartar hut.

Just as the ladies, riding on asses, and accompanied by their lovers, entered the village, the following dialogue took place, in a house lying close by the way-side.

“Look, Selim, is not that Akim, the merchant, of Baku? W’Allah!—by God—it is he! How long has he been dealing in women instead of carpets? See, what a pair of slender-shaped Houris are trotting by his side!”

“One might swear it was Akim,” rejoined the interrogated person, “but he was not with the caravan when we passed it, and there was nothing to be seen of the two women.”

“Thou talkest like a Kasviner.* Can he not have proceeded, or followed, the caravan by a side-

* Kasvin is a town in Persia, whose inhabitants play the same character in the common conversation of that part of the world, as the Krähwinklers in Germany, or the Gascons in France.

way? What says the proverb: 'Two Russians to one Persian, two Persians to one Armenian, and the bargain is equal.' Allah has flashed light into my head; my eyes are open; I see through the whole affair. Let us go directly to Achmed Chan, and his anger will turn into joy."

The speakers were two Nukers† of Achmed Chan, who on the return of the hitherto fruitless expedition, had likewise sought shelter with his train from the storm.

Half an hour afterwards Zuléikha and Fatima were already in the possession of their pursuers. I pass over the mournful scenes connected with this event. One thing only I must notice, however much I grieve that I cannot be silent upon it. Both the ladies were treated with all possible tenderness; they bore their grief only in their heart; whilst Mirza-Schaffy, the Wise Man of Gjändsha, the singer of love, of wine, and of roses, had, besides the never-healing grief of his heart, also to endure, at the command of the rough Achmed Chan, another and more disagreeable infliction.

* Nukers—armed grooms.

On the soles of the same feet, which had borne him upwards to the chamber of Zuléikha, and the summit of Fortune, he received—the Bastinado !—

CHAPTER VI.

THE SCHOOL OF WISDOM.

WHEN Mirza-Schaffy had thus revealed to me the secret of his love, his heart lay open before me, as the gardens of Tiflis. Thenceforth he had no other secret to keep from his disciple, and every affectation and over-gloss of his being were stripped off in intercourse with me.

So true it is, that a few hours of intimate communication bring two strangers nearer to one another, than whole years spent together of ordinary life.

I spared Mirza-Schaffy every humbling recollection connected with the very painful termination

of his story, and he was thankful to me for my reservation. He appeared indeed at first in doubt whether the dark side of his narrative had not injured his worth in my regard; but he soon became convinced that by the entire impression of his story he had rather gained than lost in my esteem.

The sun of his life was gone down, and nothing was left him but the moonlight of remembrance. His whole nature spoke out in the concluding strophe of one of his mournful songs :

“ O’er time’s dark skies, as he onward flies,
When life’s bright day sets before us,
Remembrances sweet, like stars, arise,
They tell us night is come o’er us !”

I knew it did him good to tell me in familiar hours of his lost one; especially in the gloomy winter nights, when the storm tumultuated without, and the wind howled down so dreadfully from the mountains, that one might have imagined the whole human race were expressing its agony in one long piercing note of woe.

Often therefore, at such times I sought to turn the conversation upon Zuléikha ; besides, her name had acquired a higher significance for me, for the lays which Mirza-Schaffy had consecrated to her memory, were the roses in his garland of songs.

That she was the Wise Man of Gjändsha's first love I have already indicated by the superscription of his story. Nor had he ever, as far as was known, entered into any close intercourse with the sex again ; though never for a moment did he doubt, that all of womankind must fall in love with him at the very sight of his person. Zuléikha was still, in his regard, the embodied conception of all feminine beauty ; the maidenly concentration of all the grace and superlativeness of earth ; and since she had loved him, how could any other hate him ?

In accordance with this modest presupposition, he had thus far regulated his intercourse with the fair sex.

All the virtues, all the charms of woman, were set down to the account of Zuléikha ; all the darker aspects, on the contrary, to the account of the remaining women of the world. No more could he

love; as little else could he be indifferent; he resolved, therefore, to let all other women suffer for the pain he had endured in the love of one.

In his elegant habits there was no perceptible difference; his head was always as white as freshly fallen snow; his beard fragrant and crisp as the beard of Salomo, whom he frequently cited; and his nails and finger tips were painted as blue as the Georgian sky.

His pyramidal cap was—so at least he thought—a perfect snare for loving hearts. Whenever on the balcony or terrace of a house, he descried a female form, he invariably availed himself of the opportunity of showing part of his white head, and of sending up one of his invincible glances; after which he confidently adjusted his cap, and walked off in full satisfaction at the revenge he had taken, and with the proud conviction of having achieved a new conquest.

The possibility of deriving advantages from such conquests never concerned him; he only wished to make victims, and indeed as many as possible. What trouble did it give him, therefore, if the

young ladies reddened at the glimpse of his head, or if their hearts sank within them before the fire of his eye !

* * * * *

In the course of the winter Mirza-Schaffy became richer by a disciple. Two travellers, K— and R—, had arrived from Germany, the first for the purpose of studying natural history, the second as a linguist and antiquary.

Similar inclinations and objects of travel soon induced a friendship between myself and R—, who had already acquired a considerable knowledge of the oriental languages. We generally studied and roamed about the town and its environs in the morning hours, and in the evening he shared in the lessons which I received three times a-week, and which Mirza-Schaffy called “the Hours of Wisdom.”

Now and then also came several friends, more or less acquainted with the Tartan and Persian languages, to visit us during the Hours of Wisdom ; so that under Mirza-Schaffy’s direction a formal Divan arose. The Wise Man of Gjändsha spoke first, and sang and explained to us a song, which, if it

was his own production, always began or ended with his own glorification. For example :—

“ Whene’er I sing, leaps glad the coy
Young heart of every maiden,
With pearly words of sparkling joy,
My silken threads are laden !

“ And with them mingles fragrancy,
In breath of houris scented,
Sweet as the flowery wreath to me,
Zukéikha’s love presented.

“ Yet marvel not that poet’s mouth
So eloquently singeth ;
That wisdom here, like fiery youth,
To ardent frenzy clingeth !

“ Know ye from whence my strains arise ?
Who told me wisdom’s story ?
I read it from her beaming eyes,
And veiled in words its glory !

“ What wonder if such full delight,
And charm my songs should render,
When that which from me wings its flight,
From Beauty catches splendour ?

"She with the Dshemshid goblet* vies,
A source of revelation ;
A fairy realm around her lies,
Of love and inspiration !

"Then am I not the echo-lay
Of wonderfullest powers ?
And is not mine a gentle way,
Like Beauty's way of flowers ?"

His songs were always well supplied with Arabian words, and if, as frequently happened, an unintelligible expression occurred, he left it to our own acuteness to divine its meaning. "A fine word !" he would evasively exclaim, but seldom condescended to an explanation.

When the song was ended, each of us was obliged to favour the company with a saying of wisdom, or if he failed in ideas, to relate a story.

That we were not overscrupulous as regards originality of thought and expression, I will venture to confess to you in confidence. For the most part

* The Dshem or Dshemshid goblet, at the bottom of which all the secrets of the earth were revealed, takes its name from the old Persian King, Dshem.

originality was only the characteristic of the faults we committed. On every saying, Mirza-Schaffy remarked whether it were wise or unwise. And if now and then we chanced to emit an extraordinary dash of thought, he never failed to put it to rhyme, and always in a few minutes.

Thus one of our circle who was in love remarked: "It is very singular that the heart of man should be so long wrapped in night, and hide inconspicuously within itself the constant measures, until the eye of woman, like a torch, shines in upon him, scattering the darkness away, and bringing what was hidden to light."

Mirza-Schaffy immediately began to sing

"My heart always beat with thee,

As Heaven with the sun always.

Thou art a splendour upon my face,

Whence that, in deep night, I always.

"One in the world is found a heart,

Which, when it meets, is true and true;

And they who meet, are true and true,

And thus, in love, are true and true."

He, Mirza-Schaffy, said the lover, "what

thou singest is thy song ! I have no share therein but the joy of listening."

" 'No,' responded the Wise Man of Gjändsha, in tuneful fertility :

"Thou art the begetter of song,
I put it the drapery bland on ;
Thou bringest the marble, the pure,
I lay the sculpturing hand on.

"Thou givest the spirit, the thought,
I take its essence my stand on ;
And if it's deficient, I fill
Till o'er the brim it expand on."

The lover, a young tourist, returning home from Persia, and whose heart had lost its way among the dark locks of a slender Georgian girl, was quite entranced at the poetical dexterity of the Wise Man of Gjändsha.

"Mirza-Schaffy !" he cried, "what are all the poets of the West to thee ? What is a night-lamp to the sun, or a grain of dust to the desert ?"

"The same thing applies to them," answered the Wise Man, nodding his head complacently, "the same thing applies to them, which once, in a

journey through Persia, I sang of the Viziers of the Shah."

"And what was that, O Mirza?"

"In Vizier's divan, by the Shah's high word,
I set their power to fool—

"Mirza! what thinkest thou of what thou'st heard?
Declare, and naught conceal."

"I said: 'I'll tell thee what I think, and will
Nothing from thee conceal:—

I heard the rumble of a clattering mill,
But saw no flowing mill.'

I was desirous of ascertaining what progress this ingenious crime had made in the knowledge of the West, and endeavoured, by all sorts of questions, to discover the extent of his information on this point. I shall here give in brief the result of my investigations.

In order to visit the Evening Land, one must sail over the black waters, or wander through the tracts of Muscovy. Whether the children of that Land dwell in tents, or in holes of rock, whether they ride on camels, elephants, horses, or asses, the

Mirza was unable exactly to determine. But he was perfectly familiar with the fact that they were divided into three great races; the race of the Nemshians, the Germans—the race of the Inglis, the English—and the race of the Farsh, the French.

On my asking him how these three races are distinguished from each other, I received the information that the Nemshians consist merely of Mullahs and Dilbilirs—grammarians; whilst the Inglis manufacture excellent cloth—here the Mirza pointed to his blue kaftan—and the best razors in the world. Of the Farsh he only knew that they laugh and talk a great deal, and in particular have an agreeable smell.

In fact the Wise Man of Gjändsha's opinions of the people of the West were pure empiricism. All the Germans of his acquaintance had studied with him the sacred languages; of the French no other specimen had reached his eye than one tutor and two periwig makers, who exactly corresponded with his description; the English, on the other hand, he only knew from their manufactures, celebrated over the whole of Asia; and he praised the

goodness of Allah, who had provided such persons, that the wise men of the East might not be destitute of clothes to cover their limbs, nor of sharp razors to polish their heads.

Of the English razors in particular, the Mirza spoke with affecting acknowledgement ; for once in brighter years he had possessed a pair himself, but by means of a Cossack—defilement on his head—they had been lost.

Whilst the Wise Man of Gjändsha was relating to us the history of his razors, the amorous tourist, the captive of the locks, who lived under the same roof with me, slipped into his chamber to work a surprise upon the Mirza. He came back with a pair of bran-new, beautifully mounted razors in his hand. He held them up before the eyes of the Wise Man, and asked : “How dost thou like these ?”

“Tshok !—very much—W’Allah !—by God.”

“Take them then in remembrance of me. And may thy understanding always remain as keen as the edge, and thy head always as bright as the blades of these razors !”

Mirza-Schaffy took the present with an expression

of silent delight, by which we saw how well he knew, in joy as in grief, to preserve the just moderation.

The Wise Man put the razors in his pocket, and prepared to go. As he took his leave, he cast another glance of satisfaction at a pair of English scissors lying before me.

“ I like the scissors too !” he observed.

“ I am glad of it,” I replied, and wished him good night.

“ Achshamminis chéir olssun !—May thy eventide be fair !”

CHAPTER VII.

THE STORY OF THE TONGUES AND THE PEST.

An Interlude.

THE following morning found me sitting on the sofa in my room, with a friend, the physician who had cured me of my wounds. We were in excellent humour, smoking the fragrant tobacco of Mingrelia, and chatting of Germany and home remembrances. Dr. X——, although resident here in the Russian service, as chief physician of the brigade, was an honest German whom destiny had driven, fifteen years ago, from his native place, in consequence of a free-thinking production, such as perhaps might now be published even in Vienna,

without any imminent risk on the part of the author.

Our conversation was interrupted by a knock at the door. I opened it, and an elastic, slimly moulded Tartar youngster came softly in.

After he had performed the customary salutation of the country, by slightly touching his breast and forehead with his right hand; by which he signified: here is my heart, here my understanding, I lay them both at thy feet!—after he had done this, and repeated it three times, he bowed himself almost to the earth before me, and then asked, looking up shyly in my face, whether I was the Alim of Fränkijistan, the young Wise Man of the West? He had brought me a message from Mirza-Schaffy, the Wise Man of Gjändsha.

“May fortune follow thy seps,” I replied, “what is the Wise Man of Gjändsha’s request?”

He looked peeringly about the room, and then mysteriously drew out of his pocket a letter addressed to me. I opened the singularly folded paper, and read what here follows in faithful translation:

"Light of the Evening Land ! Pillar of Wisdom !

"Thy friend, the loving captive of the locks, having presented me with a pair of English razors, because they pleased me : I cast the glance of desire at thy scissors, because they are English, and please me. Flowers before thy feet !

"Mirza-Schaffy."

With a salutation to Mirza-Schaffy, and the wish that lilies might spring up from the hairs of his beard, and almond-trees from the pieces of nail, which he cut off with the scissors, I surrendered to the boy the articles in question.

The boy vanished as he had come, with the flexibility of an erected snake.

"This is a relic of a custom of the country in olden times," said the Doctor; "when the simple expression, 'that pleases me,' was always followed by the possession of the object exciting pleasure. You will often have to keep your eyes and ears wide open to what is going on around you in this country," he continued, "among the Russians, as well as among the natives. Have you been yet to the Military Hospital of Tiflis?"

"No."

"Then come along with me, I have to see some patients there now."

I willingly accepted the invitation of my medical friend. On the way he explained to me preparatively, what a peculiar treatment the Russian soldiers required; how difficult it was to find out by questioning, what was the seat and cause of their disease; and how it was almost beyond the penetration of the physician, to come at the root of the evil. "If one of these fellows is injured in any way in the upper part of his body, whether in the stomach, back, or head, he invariably answers to the question, 'what is the matter with him?' 'I have a pain in my heart,'—*sserze bolit*. If the evil resides in the under part, the answer is: 'I have a pain in my foot,'—*nog bolit*."

After a few minutes, we reached the hospital, which is built and furnished quite in the European style. As we entered the first room, all the patients, who could stand upright, got up and placed themselves before their beds, as straight and ridiculously serious, as on parade, when any "great person" is present.

"How are you, veteran?" says the Doctor to the first.

"I have a pain in my heart," was the timorous reply.

"Show me your tongue."

The soldier did as he was requested, by producing from his mouth a piece of flesh of unmannerly length and width.

"What is the matter with you?" went on the question to a second.

"I have a pain in my heart."

"Put your tongue out."

The tongue did not fail to appear.

The third had a pain in his foot, *i. e.* to say, a wound in his loins; but this made no difference, he must put his tongue out like the rest.

After we had in this fashion inspected about a dozen tongues, the Doctor suddenly clapped me on the shoulder, and cried:

"Now, look round."

There stood the poor fellows in a row, with their mouths open and their tongues stretched out as if they would stretch till doomsday.

"Tongues in!" shouted now the Doctor's word of command, and the tongues vanished.

"But how can you make so merry with the poor creatures?" I asked my companion.

"You must not judge of the rule by the exception," said he, "I wished to show you, by an example, how much 'the good spirit of the army,' has to do with the discipline of the soldiers. The joke will do no harm to the patients. There are none but convalescents in this room, and besides they will leave us in a few days, and will certainly believe that by putting out their tongues in the presence of the chief physician, they considerably accelerated their cure."

* * * * *

As we left the hospital, we were met by Colonel Y——, an old acquaintance from the Baltic provinces.

My medical friend, having some other visits to make, took his leave.

"A magnificent fellow," said the Colonel, looking after the Doctor, "a magnificent fellow, but too honest for our state of things. He will never get on well in Russia. In general, I may say, the golden

time is gone by for physicians in the Caucasus, now pest-making is all over."

"*Pest-making* ? What do you mean by that ?"

"You have been living now some months in the Caucasus, and don't know what pest-making is ?" asked the Colonel, with a dubious leer.

The word was certainly familiar to me, but I was very willing to get some rather more exact information about the matter, and therefore answered him in the negative.

"Pest-making," began the Colonel, "is a speculation like every other. Some physician living in the interior of the country, makes use of the first good case of serious disease, by spreading a report that the pest is in the village. Now the inhabitants know very well from experience, all the evils which the pest brings in its train ; the shutting up, singeing, burning, fumigating, and heaven knows what besides. Not to expose themselves to these inevitable evils, the poor people importune the physician to rid them, if possible, of the pest without delay ; and promise him to this end, as much money and presents as they can raise. If he finds the conditions acceptable, the pest vanishes just as it came ;

in the other case, official notice is given of it, and all prudential measures are put into requisition, until the announcement is made that no more danger exists.

"The physician then receives admission to an order, elevation of rank, or some other recompense, for the skilfulness with which he has removed the evil. In either case the speculation turns out to his advantage.

"I have known several pest-physicians who have made their fortune in this way, and attained rank and order. But these times are now gone by; and Germans, as a rule, are too honest, and too blunt for such arts, as in general, for all offices, where one must keep an eye shut and a hand open to feather his nest. If you make a Pole or Russian chief physician of a hospital, he will keep everything in the best order, and in a few years be a rich man. If you give a German such an appointment, everything runs into confusion and he will get into debt to boot."

"That I don't exactly understand."

"And yet nothing is easier to understand. The whole art consists in being on good terms with the

manager of the hospital, i. e. one must live and let live. Now a German with his fantastic notions of honesty, is not the man for that. For example, the manager comes and says :

“ ‘ Doctor, we want shirts for the patients.’

“ ‘ How many ?’

“ ‘ Two hundred.’

“ The money is paid down, and the shirts are made. In a fortnight the manager appears again and says :

“ ‘ Doctor, we want some shirts for the patients.’

“ ‘ How many ?’

“ ‘ Two hundred.’

“ ‘ How is it possible ? It is only a fortnight since we bought two hundred new shirts.’

“ ‘ They are all unfit to wear again. Would you like to come and look at them yourself ?’

“ If the physician is scrupulous, he goes and finds exactly two hundred shirts unfit to wear. So it goes on from month to month. The manager gets rich, the physician of course perceives the fraud, but nevertheless, can say nothing against it, and besides, has neither time nor inclination to go into disgusting details.

"If, on the contrary, he is prudent enough to come to an understanding with the manager, everything proceeds in the nicest unison, the gain is fairly divided, the shirts are always whole, the clothing of the patients clean and orderly—in short, all unpleasantnesses are obviated. In this way, in spite of the trifling salary, everything may be managed advantageously here, if one only knows how to adapt himself a little to circumstances. At Moscow I knew a gentleman in the police-department, who, with a yearly income of eight hundred rubles, had an expenditure of twenty thousand; and the blessing of Providence rested visibly on him, for he was never in debt, and carried a good round body into the bargain."

"But did not the Government suspect anything?"

"The Government knew very well, but it was its own interest to seem to ignore the matter. Only think what enormous sums are saved the state every year in this way."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SCHOOL OF WISDOM.

Continued.

"MIRZA-SCHAFFY !" I began, when we sat again assembled in the Divan of Wisdom, "what wilt thou say when I tell thee that the Wise men of the West consider you as stupid as you do them."

"What can I do, but be amazed at their folly?" he replied. "What new thing can I learn from them, when they only repeat mine?"

He ordered a fresh tshibuq, mused awhile meditatingly before him, bade us get ready the kalemdan (writing-stand), and then began to sing :

“ Shall I laughing, shall I weeping
Go, because men are so brute,
Always foreign sense repeating,
And in self-expression mute ?

“ No, the Maker’s praise shall rise
For the foolish generation ;
Else the wisdom of the wise,
Would be lost from observation !”

“ Mirza-Schaffy,” said I, interrupting him again,
“ would it not be a prudent beginning to clothe
thy sayings in a western dress, to the end that
they might be a mirror for the foolish, a rule of
conduct for the erring, and a source of high enjoy-
ment for our wives and maidens, whose charm is as
great as their inclination to wisdom ?”

“ Women are everywhere wise,” replied my
reverend teacher, “ and their power is greater than
fools imagine. Their eyes are the original seat of
all true devotion and wisdom, and he who inspires
from them needs not wait for death to enter upon
the joys of Paradise. The smallest finger of woman
overthrows the mightiest edifice of faith, and the

youngest maiden mars the oldest institutions of the Church !”

“ But thou hast not yet given me an answer to my question, O Mirza !”

“ Thou speakest wisely. The seed of my words has taken root in thy heart. Write ; I will sing !”

And now he sang to me a number of wonderful songs, part of which here follow in an English dress.

• MIRZA-SCHAFFY'S CONFESSION OF FAITH.

“ Hafiz my teacher is, my church where wines are selling ;
I love good men and women, and strong drinks care-
dispelling.

Among carousers hence I'm well reputed,

And in their circles as the Wise saluted.

Coming—here comes the Wise Man ! each doth say

Going—how soon the Wise Man goes to-day !

Failing—where doth the Wise Man now delay ?

Staying—in merry wise we'll clash, they say,

Our glasses loudly. Then, God the Lord, I pray,

That, ever heart and foot the fairest pathway wending,

Far off from holy mosques and bonzes all, I may

With heart be led to love, and with foot to wine be tend-
ing ;

That I, man's idle follies and all illusions spurning,
 The mystery of my being in bowl of wine exploring,
 May in some Form of Beauty to embrace the All be
 learning,
 And in her eyes' delight on devotion's wing be soaring !
 O blissfullest sensation ! O joy above ye far, men !
 When, Colchis' wine of fire through blood and marrow
 chasing,
 I clasp my love round, and she me, both interlacing,
 Each blessing, and each being blessed—so might I die
 then ! Amen."

* * * * *

MIRZA-SCHAFFY GIVES HIS OPINION OF THE
 SHAH OF PERSIA.

"A learned scribe once came to me from far :
 'Mirza !' said he, 'what thinkst thou of the Shah ?
 Was wisdom really born in him with years ?
 And are his eyes as spacious as his ears ?"

" 'He's just as wise as all who round them bind
 Capuche and gown ; he knows what an amount
 Of stupid fear keeps all his people blind,
 And how to turn it to his own account.'"

* * * * *

MINKA-NCHAPFY PRAISES THE CHARMS OF ZULÉIKHA.

" Looking at thy tender little feet,
Makes me always wonder, sweetest maiden,
How they so much beauty can be bearing!

" Looking at thy lovely little hands,
Makes me always wonder, sweetest maiden,
How they so to wound me can be daring!

" Looking at thy rosy luring lips,
Makes me always wonder, sweetest maiden,
How they of a kiss e'er can be sparing!

" Looking at thy meaningful bright eyes,
Makes me always wonder, sweetest maiden,
How for greater love they can be caring

" Than I feel. O, look at me, and love!
Warmer than my heart, thou sweetest maiden,
Heart in thy love never will be sharing!

" Listen to this rapture-reaching song!
Fairer than my mouth, thou sweetest maiden,
Mouth thy praise will never be declaring!

* * * * *

MIRZA-SCHAFFY CELEBRATES A FESTAL DAY.

"To that joyous day's remembrance,
Fill a bumper strong, and drain,
When from prayer-house into wine-shop,
I once boldly sprung amain!

"I was stupified in blindness,
And was growing old apace,
But with wine, and song, and loving,
I have been made young again!

"Drink, Mirza-Schaffy, get drunken,
Aye in love, and song, and wine,
Only when thou'rt fresh, thy songs are
Full of fire and strong again!

• • • • •

MIRZA-SCHAFFY BECOMES A BELIEVER FROM LOVE.

"Tell me, maiden, why thou fearest,
Wherefore glides thy foot away?
When I'm drawn to kiss thee, dearest,
With thy ringlets long to play—

Why I'm asking, why I'm seeking,
Do not let it grieve thee, love
So 'tis written in the keeping
For me of Fate's book above!

" Yea, full faith I am inspiring,
Faith in Allah, and Koran!
Faith that thee, my heart desiring,
Love thee must, and love thee can!
Others were decreed to weeping,
I, to happiness and love:
So 'tis written in the keeping
For me of Fate's book above!

" Gives love to thee desolation?
Smiling scare off fear and pain!
For the fulfilled destination
Of my proud heart must remain!
Whether musing, whether seeking,
None besides thee can I love:
So 'tis written in the keeping
For me of Fate's book above!

" Hopest thou for Heaven's effulgence,
When Earth's circle is complete;
Love me here with full indulgence,
Who am prostrate at thy feet!

Do not other bliss be seeking,
Yield to my entreating love :
So 'tis written in the keeping—
For thee of Fate's book above !

“ Take this song of charm enduring,
Listen its impassioned swell ;
Bliss of Paradise securing,
Happiness on Earth as well !
Other fortune there be seeking,
Meanwhile, dearest, let us love :
So 'tis written in the keeping
For us of Fate's book above !

“ As to morning wind balm-laden,
Rosy chalice opens fair ;
So may heart of lovely maiden,
Open to my songful prayer.
She may feel what I am seeking,
What impels me to her love :
So 'tis written in the keeping
For her of Fate's book above !”

* * * * *

MIRZA-SCHAFFY PRAISES HIS OWN FORTUNE.

“ Most fortunate of Fortune’s train am I !
While idle world in folly’s rolling round,
And each, the bliss that lies before his eye
To seek, transgresses the plain pathway’s bound ;
While monk his wearied body doth chastise,
And dreams that Heaven will one day recompense him
For all he groaned on sore bent knees away ;
While priest from yonder region prophesies
In pious rage, to whomsoe’er incense him,
Things which he knows as little of as they ;
I, at the feet of lovely maiden kneeling,
Am writing down in songs of joyous feeling
The meaning of her eyes. Delicious wine
Is flowing at my side in sparkling mirth ;
I quaff full goblets of its strength benign,
And think : there is upon this pleasant Earth,
With love and wine, a Paradise divine !”

* * * * *

“ Mirza-Schaffy !” said I, when the Wise Man
stopped for a moment to drink a glass of wine
and begin a fresh tshibuiq, “ the young ladies’
hearts will beat high with the sweet power of thy

songs, but the wise men of our people will say, in their envy, that thou art deficient in variety of intuitions and conceptions. Hast thou not also written songs on other subjects than wine, love, and roses ?”

Without deeming me just then worthy of an answer, or even looking up, the Mirza continued for awhile blowing before him thick clouds of smoke, sipped down two more glasses of wine, and then began to sing the following song :

“ Do my songs displease you, since I
Always sing in one strain only ?
Only sing of love and roses,
Spring time, nightingales and wine ?

“ Which is nobler ; that the poet
Glow-worms, night and lamps be praising—
Or that he should sing the glories
From the one sun that outshine ?

“ Like a sun too, I am pouring
Far and wide my song-beams round me ;
Radiating always beauty,
Never aught that’s less divine.

" Other songs may be extolling
Battle, Mosque, and Prince's splendour—
I shall sing of Roses, Wine and
Loving, themes for ever mine !

" Oh ! Mirza-Schaffy ! how sweetly
Rise thy songful odours hither ;
Where are poet's lays that dare in
Beauty to compare with thine !"

CHAPTER IX.

THE SCHOOL OF WISDOM.

Continued.

AMONG the many learned men of the country, whose acquaintance I made during the time that Mirza-Schaffy instructed me in wisdom, the most distinguished in rank and knowledge was Abbas Kuli Chan, a scion of the old ruling house of Baku.

He differed essentially from the Ulémas of his race, by his more extensive knowledge of the manners, customs, and conditions of the West,

it will be by a certain inclination towards the
the other way

My long residence in Petersburg and Moscow,
I had completely appropriated the Russian lan-
guage was in favour at Court, and invested
me with a high rank in the Russian

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The mutual praise, so overflowing in its abundance, which they bestowed on one another, put them both in a very happy humour. From the Koran, from Saadi, Hafiz, and Fizuli, each authenticated the other to be the moving embodiment of all the wisdom of earth.

A formal emulation in old and original songs took place between them ; for every piece of flattery was overlaid with a tuneful quotation. Unfortunately, however, the entertainment flowed so swiftly, that I was unable to note down any coherent account of it.

Nevertheless, being unwilling to let the long session go by, without any gain on my part, I requested the Chan to write for me one of his artistic songs in remembrance. He nodded with an approving look, and promised to write the most beautiful song that ever the mouth of man had uttered ; a song in praise of his Fatima, playing on her stringed instrument.

Whilst Mirza-Schaffy raised a questioning look on hearing the praise which the Chan expended on himself, the latter took the kalem (reed-pen) and wrote what follows :

FATIMA PLAYING ON HER STRINGED INSTRUMENT.

“ O'er the strings thy fingers are straying,
O'er my heart stray the tones ;
And it wanders obeying,
Far away from the zones ;
Up tending,
Round thee bending,
Round thy heart to be growing
And clinging,
Round thee flinging,
Its glad mirth overflowing—
Oh ! thou Spirit from me springing,
Life on me bestowing !
Dazzled, blinded, confounded,
I see in thy glances
The whole world and its rounded
Unbounded expanses ;
And round us it dances
In drunken confusion,
Like floating illusion ;
Around thee I'm reeling,
All round me is wheeling—
And Heaven and Ocean.
In flashing commotion,

Round us both as thou singest,
Roll reeling and rushing—
Thou Joy to me that wingest,
Thou Soul from me outgushing !”

Mirza-Schaffy loudly extolled the beauty of the song, and said the tymbal of Fame ought to be beaten for the poet on the occasion.

But Abbas Kuli Chan rose to depart, with the promise that he would visit me again on the following day, and bring me a Persian grammar composed by himself.

The learned Chan was only come for a few weeks to Tiflis, to prepare a Russian translation of his history of Daghestan, which was written in the Persian language. This work appeared in the year 1846, and affords a rich, but unsifted material for the knowledge of the countries near the Caspian Sea.

* * * * *

Scarcely had Abbas Kuli Chan left the room when Mirza-Schaffy seized hold of the wine-flask standing on the table, and hastily tumbled down a goblet of wine.

"Wherefore didst thou not drink in the presence of the chan?" I inquired.

"Because he belongs to the pious, and drinks no wine; at least not before people."

"Why should *his* belonging to the pious keep *thee* from drinking?"

"He is older and more powerful than I: by drinking, I should have offended him, and I was obliged to honour him, since he was thy guest. How did Saal speak to the hero Rustam, his son? Esteem no foe whomsoever he may be, too insignificant or weak; often e'er now have we seen a rivulet sprung from a little source, widen into a rapid stream, and a camel loaded with burdens led away from its banks."*

"Hast thou no wider base for thy continence, O Mirza?"

"Why ask the question?" said he filling up again, "come and drink with me!"

"The fairest base is
The golden base of the brinker!
The fairest face is
The merry face of the drinker!"

• Saadi: Gjülistan.

“Thou speakest wisely,” I rejoined, “and I will drink and sing with thee as ever; but thou must just answer me one question previously. Thou art daily praising in thy songs the virtues of wine, and I believe in them (it is my destiny!); but how does it happen that the Georgians and the Russians, who in this country drink more wine than the camels drink water, do not become wiser in consequence?”

“The Russians are not so altogether stupid, else they would not have succeeded in tormenting all other nations with the hand of power; and the Georgians—but write, I will sing to thee!

“ From the winecup’s fiery streaming,
From the goblet’s depth of pleasure,
Bubble death and—delectation,
Bubble fair things and—misseeming,
As the drinker’s proper measure,
Is of worth and exaltation.

“ In debasement deeply sunken,
Lies the fool by wine beridden;
When he drinks—he’s ever drunken;
When we drink—we’re joyward bidden,

Flash out sparkling wit unshrunk,
Speak with tongues of angel-seeming,
And with ardour we are beaming,
And with beauty we are drunken.

“ For resembles wine the shower,
Which to mud more mud amasses,
But on fair fields sheds a dower,
Full of blessing as it passes !

* * * * *

“ Has not Saadi already sung : ‘ The rain
although it never changes its nature, will in the
garden bring forth anemones, and all sorts of
beautiful flowers, but in salt and unfruitful soils
will only engender thistles ! ’ ”

CHAPTER X.

RAMBLES, DISTANT VIEWS, AND WONDERS.

My dwelling lay at the foot of St. David's mountain, which, on a bold projection in its midst, supports a very ancient church, whose patron saint gave to the mountain its name.

From of old the Church of St. David has been famed for its miraculous powers.

Whatever woman or maiden walks round the church three times, and succeeds each time in fixing a stone on the outer wall, in such a way that the stone remains clinging, without being fastened by cement or mortar: every wish she indulges in her

heart will be fulfilled, provided her thoughts are not polluted by sinful desires.

So that if there is a maiden who is glowing with pure love to obtain a husband, or a woman who is ardently longing for offspring, her prayers will be heard, if St. David has no particular reason for keeping them from the ears of the Almighty.

So runs the legend of many a maiden, who believed in the miraculous powers of the Church, and in reality found a husband; and of women who in like manner have been blessed with offspring.

On Thursday especially, the day of the birth or death of the great saint, his wonderful agency is most wonderfully efficacious.

For on this day numbers of stones are found on the circumference of the temple, which all remain clinging to the outer walls, without being fastened by cement or mortar.

In order, however, that these stones should not fall into unconsecrated hands, they are carefully collected by the servants of the Church, and delivered to the faithful for a sum of money, which appears small in comparison with the great blessing of St. David.

Accordingly, every Thursday the women and maidens of Tiflis make a pilgrimage in festal array to St. David's mountain ; and he who sees the slender daughters of Tiflis, those blossoms of beauty, assembled here in such abundance, and does not believe in miracles on earth, it were better for him that an old negress be hanged about his neck, and he be rolled down into the Valley of Didubeh, where it is deepest.

Even Mirza-Schaffy, the unchristian Wise Man of Gjändsha, extolled the miraculous powers of St. David, who, though dead, excites so many charming women to the liveliest exertion !

“Where in all the world,” the Mirza often exclaimed with enthusiasm, when, smoking the pipe of contemplation, we sat on the balcony or roof of the house, and with the look of satisfaction, saw the pious pilgrimesses passing by ; “where in all the world does the eye catch a glimpse of legs so plump and lovely ? and where does beauty walk as here with naked foot ?”

For it is an old pious custom maintained unimpaired with great scrupulousness, especially by the

possessors of beautiful feet, for the fair petitioners, before the beginning of their pilgrimage, to put off shoes and stockings, and climb up barefooted to the Church of St. David.

Quite lovely do the little feet, whether naked or chaussés, contrast with the wide, many-folded pantaloons of red or blue silk, which spring forth beneath a Sarafan of elegant shape, cut round on the bosom, and of most weighty material. The head is graced by a crown-like ornament, from which a white veil floats down behind over the long-entwining, braided hair.

Most of the Georgian ladies of rank wear likewise the tshadra, a snow-white overdress enveloping the whole body, but which the beautiful creatures know how to dispose in such a manner that the whole figure is distinctly manifest.

During the time of the pilgrimage, the path which leads to the chapel, really winds like a girdle of beauty around the body of the mountain.

And when the eye, yet drunk with gazing on the voluptuously moulded limbs of the slender

daughters of Tiflis, strays downwards into the undulating vale, another prospect opens before it, which may match with the loveliest on earth.

At our feet lies the city, with its palaces, cupolas, towers, and half subterranean saklis (earth-huts), with gardens of rich shade outspreading among them, where all the fruits native with us, such as the peach, the fig, the pomegranate, the lotus, the mulberry, vine, quince and medlar, thrive in luxurious abundance. In the distance the Kyros (Kur) that streams through the city, loses its long serpent-track amidst a region of green hills, and high above us arches the deep blue Georgian sky.

We descend from David's mountain; observe attentively the saklis at his feet, built one over another like terraces, little insignificant houses of rude stones, rudely thrown up, without windows and every trace of external or internal decoration; and amazed we ask: are these the shells in which Georgia hides her pearls of beauty?

The light falls into these saklis from above, through the flat roof, by an opening which serves at the same time for chimney; and in bad weather

when the opening must be closed, night and twilight reign within.

After we have made our toilsome way beyond some of these saklis, barked at by monstrous dogs, and in continual danger, at one false step, of falling from above uninvited into the house of some Georgian family, we reach a street anything but clean, which leads us out again into an open place, where the Gymnasium of Tiflis uprises before us, and reminds us that among the Troglodytes of the land, Europeans also dwell.

We pass the Gymnasium, a colossal structure, entirely furnished in the European style, where the sons of the mountains are disciplined into faithful subjects of the Russian Chaliphs; and at our right, with its terrace-like gradations behind, lies the gorgeous palace of the Governor of the Caucasus, with its magnificent gardens abounding in Asiatic luxuriousness, but managed by a European hand. This palace was built upon the ruins of the old castle of the Georgian kings founded by Rostom.

We go one or two paces further, and come

to the Erivan Square, the exact central point of the fashionable world of Tiflis. Here Europe and Asia clasp hands.

Over against the large and entirely modern crown-buildings of the Russians, are seen the flat, sloping roofs, and encircling galleries of the comfortable Armenian houses, which form as it were a transition to the rude, half-buried Saklis, of the Georgians, Persians, and Tartars.

By the side of the Georgian lady veiled in her tshadra, walks the wife of the Russian functionary ; by the side of the wild Kurd of Ararat rides the Cossack of the Don ; around the Moscovite grey-coats crowd the ragged Mushats (carriers of burdens) from Ismerethi, Ossethi, and Lesghistan.

We pass by the market, and wind through the long crooked streets, where the sword cutlers, the armourers, the smiths, the tailors—in short the representatives of all trades, display their activities in *open* workshops. Here we may buy at a reasonable rate the famous Caucasian daggers (kinshals), rapiers (shashkas), powder-horns, girdles, cloths, tsherkesks, and caparisons.

These streets, always full of life, lead us to the Armenian Bazaar; and from thence past the most bustling and boisterous market of Tiflis to the caravanserai of great height and compass; which with its many cells, magazines, galleries, and vaults, constitutes a little town in itself, and is one of the most magnificent buildings of this kind in the East. Here lie accumulated the costliest fabrics of the Orient: shawls, silken stuffs, carpets and so forth; and in its wide spaces there reigns from morning to night, a stirring of men, a confusion of tongues, a variety of physiognomy and costume, that even at fair time in the liveliest towns of Germany, there is nothing like it to be seen.

Among the men, we find a mass of high-grown, fine, and powerful figures; whilst the Georgian and Armenian women whom we meet with in the bazaar and caravanserai, form, for the most part, an ugly contrast to the beautiful pilgrimesses whose acquaintance we have made in their progress to St. David's mountain. For at the markets and bazaars there are generally only old women to be seen (in Tiflis a woman is already

considered old when she is past her thirtieth year); and charming and worthy of all admiration as the Georgian women appear in their youth, their ugliness in old age is equally frightful.

This speedy change too is not compensated by those qualities which spring out of higher culture, and which among us frequently render even old and ugly women so amiable and agreeable in intercourse.

In general such an ugliness as one usually finds among the older Georgian women, belongs with us to the rarest exceptions.

We leave the great caravanseraï, and carefully avoiding a caravan of camels loaded with merchandize, wend our way to the bridge by which both halves of the city, divided by the Kyros, are connected; and when we reach "the Sand," (as a quarter of the new town Avlabar is called), we find ourselves in the midst of a *German* population.

Here dwell the migrated Swabians, here is the German colony of Tiflis, separated by the Kyros from the rest of the town.

From the bustle of the Armenian bazaar, and

the Persian caravanserai, from the store-houses of oriental treasures beset by camels and dromedaries, and animated by men with fine, sunburnt faces and long dresses of many folds, we find ourselves instantaneously in a new world, and see before us a straightforward piece of Swabian life, with all appliances of language, habitation, short pipe, and bare shirt-sleeves.

Among these broad-shouldered, strong-fisted Argonauts of the Neckar, who, having swum through the Hellespont and Bosphorus, and crossed the Black Sea, landed on the banks of the Phasis, and wandered through the forests of Colchis, here at length to live on the fruitful plains of the Kyros, in wine gardens and the fear of God,—we will settle down for a short hour's refreshment, after the long rambling of the day.

To the right, in the little, oddly tipped-up house, whose roof bespeaks a somewhat stronger inclination to the earth, than the architect originally designed, dwells honest Salzmann, mine host of the Sand.

Enter, but stoop a little, so as not to crush your head against the low doorway.

On the right is the billiard-room ; there the clamour of Russian officers is sufficiently perceptible ; but here, to the left, is a little, quiet apartment, painted blue, which Herr Salzmann always keeps in readiness for his German guests, and which is inaccessible to all Russian and Asiatic footsteps. Thither we turn in.

A little, stiff fellow, resembling anything but a *garçon d'hôtel*, presents himself before us.

"God be with you, old fellow ! How is Herr Salzmann ?"

"Ischt nich zu Hause !"

"Then call Frau Salzmann hither, and bring us wine, Kachetine Evening-red !"

That was the name we had given, by way of festive baptism, to the blood-red wine of Kachetos, because at the sight of it a religious awe came over us, as at the sight of the setting sun. . . .

Frau Salzmann, the fruitful spouse of mine host of the Sand, appears ; first of all wipes her cooking hand, in a housewifely manner, on her white apron, and then extends it to us in friendly welcome

Among other excellent qualities, Frau Salzmann also possesses that of baking the best omelets in

Tiflis. For this she has obtained, not only in the neighbourhood, but amongst all German travellers to the Caucasus, a certain celebrity. In every work of travel mention is made of her. She knows this, and accordingly lays great stress on the fact of her omelets always turning out nice and light, lest her good reputation should suffer in the eyes of the world.

In the blue-room stands a table covered with a blue cloth; there we hold our round-table. To the reasonable kachetine succeeds the dear champagne; for it is indispensable to European custom in Tiflis, to finish the repast with champagne, and to this custom every one who would pass for decent must subscribe, as much as amongst us to the custom of wearing dress-coats, and white and yellow glazed gloves.

What German traveller, who has been to Tiflis, has not sat at the round-table of Salzmann in the Sand, and become so inspired with kachetine and champagne, that on his homeward stroll through the moonlight night, the whole sky seemed like a huge table-cloth, and the moon like a shining omelet, and the stars like sparkling glasses!

So it came to pass with us that evening, when

fully refreshed from the labours of our pilgrimage to David's mountain, we left the Sand, to return into the interior of the city.

No cloudlet dimmed the light blue sky, but there was in the air a warmth that made one think the almost sun-bright moon of Georgia had also the fire of the sun.

The streets were nearly deserted ; the bazaar and all the workshops were closed. Only now and then a drunken soldier reeled past, or a Georgian lady, closely veiled in her dazzling white tshadra, floated by.

At a short distance on our left, covered with cupolas, are the hot sulphur baths, to which Tiflis owes its origin and name. We pass the street leading to these, and wend our way by the shortest course to the Erivan square.

Here and there the roofs were animated by aëreal female forms, which, in their picturesque dresses, overflowed by the moonlight, afforded a fairy-like scene.

Balalaika tones resounded through the night, in turns with the roundelay of the Georgian beauties.

Still we dared not linger among the lovely shapes ; for whenever we stopped a few moments,

and the maidens observed us, they vanished speedily from our peering eyes.

But *once* I was compelled to stop and listen ; I could not go on ; my feet were rivetted to the spot. The sound of a man's voice struck upon my ear, and the tones seemed to me so familiar,—I recognised the voice—I recognised the song—I recognised *thee*, Mirza-Schaffy, O Wise Man of Gjändsha !

I still see the yellow koshi (slippers), the red nepkavi (pantaloons), the velvet kaftan, and the transparent veil of thy Beauty, as she stood shyly on the roof of the little grey house, and listened to thy imploring tones.

Thou thoughtest thyself concealed and unobserved amid the shade of the house in the solitary street. But never shall I forget thy form, O Wise Man ! how thou didst now press thy hands to thy heart, and now hold them crescent-like to thy ears, as if in prayer before the charming creature above thee !

Where was Zuléikha, and thy faithfulness for her ?

The wonders of the beautiful evening were not yet complete.

When I was about to separate from my companions at the Erivan square, one of them requested me to accompany him for another short hour to his new dwelling.

"I have taken the house," he said to me confidentially, "because exactly opposite lives the Princess O——, a wonderfully lovely creature, a little masterpiece of creation! For three months past I have regularly followed her on all her pilgrimages to St. David's mountain. The constancy of affection which I have displayed, and which is so unusual here, seems to have moved her heart; for she has already divested herself of a great part of her Georgian shyness. She shows herself to me unveiled on the roof, receives nosegays of flowers which I throw to her secretly in the evening, and seems to have admitted two of her friends into her secret, for all three often sit for hours long above in familiar conversation, without being frightened away by my meditations at an open window."

Fortune followed our steps, for the young Princess was really still sitting on the roof with

AND MY OWN. AS WE ENTERED THE HOUSE OF MY
 MOTHER.

THE HOUSE WAS BUILT IN THE YEAR, AS IS KNOWN TO
 US, AND I SAW VICTIMS WHOSE NAME.

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Notwithstanding the trifling nature of the subject before me, I am in considerable embarrassment as to how I shall complete the picture, without violating on the one side poetical propriety, and on the other prosaical truth. I will only remark, that on my way home the words of Göthe were involuntarily humming in my ears :

“ Es war einmal ein König
Der, u. f. w.”

CHAPTER XI.

THE SCHOOL OF WISDOM.

Continued.

"MIRZA-SCHAFFY!" said I, when we sat again assembled in the Divan of Wisdom, "what says Hafiz, where he speaks of the unfaithfulness of women?"

The Mirza set his smoked-out tshibuq by his side, sipped down a glass of wine, and began to sing :

" Truly, would I of the Beauties,
Nothing like a failing prove,
But that for the most the Beauties,
Nothing know of Faith and Love."

When the Wise Man once got to singing, there was no stopping him ; scarcely had he ended the preceding verse, than he struck up another song of Hafiz.

“ Seeing thee, in mine the trace is
Of thy cheeks’ reflected light ;
See, the sun’s resplendent face is
But thy cheeks’ reflected light !”

“ Leave that now !” said I, interrupting him,
“ I wish thou wouldst instruct me to-day on another point. Tell me, O Mirza ! has not Hafiz also sung of the unfaithfulness of men ?”

“ Thy question is unwise ! How should Hafiz ever think of singing of the unfaithfulness of men ? He could leave women to complain of that ; who would be an enemy of himself ?”

He clapped his hands, ordered a fresh pipe, cast at me a searching look, to which I responded with great serenity, and thereupon he thought proper to continue his instructions.

“ How is the unfaithfulness of man to be compared with that of woman ? A flower can only be broken once ; it fades and its fragrance

is gone ! But the wind which crushes the tender rose, rages past the sturdy tree almost without a trace."

"Is not the bed of flowers pervaded also by winds, at whose breath the roses, instead of fading, only bloom more freshly?"

"Thou speakest wisely, O youth ! Thou approachest my thoughts. See how the ivy, the symbol of woman, climbs lovingly upwards on the strong laurel, for the tree's and its own adornment ! Take the supporting tree from the ivy-wreath, and this will fall to the ground and be trodden under foot of men, unless another support presents itself, on which it may rise again and twine its green."

"Speak without figures, O Mirza ! and leave the circuitous route, that the meaning of thy words may be clearer to me."

"What is speech without good figures ? What is virtue without good works ?"

"Thou art right, continue thy teaching."

"I will put a question to thee, to prove thee in the knowledge of truth. Which is rarer : foolishness among women, or wisdom among men ?"

"I think the latter."

The Mirza nodded approvingly, and after he had drunk a fresh glass, asked again :

"Which is better : to take part with the prudent or with fools ?"

"I think the former."

"Our paths lead together. Thou wilt now be in a condition to cast the glance of illumination on the secrets of unfaithfulness among men as well as among women. When the heart is quite full of one love, where is there room for another ?"

"I would request thee, O Mirza, to give me an example from thy own life, didst thou not form in thy wisdom an exception to the rule."

Again the Wise Man threw at me a searching look which I received with the same serenity as before.

"Well I am an exception !" he replied after a short pause, "for never man has loved as I ! My sun is gone down, but the glow which it has left behind is still worth more than the straw-fire of ordinary men. What says Hafiz :

" ' O buy my desolate heart, in thousand pieces though
broken,

It is as much as thousands of other men's worth ?

" The women know that, and love me. Once
one filled the place of all for me—now all do
not fill the place of one ! But because the day
is vanished, shall I not rejoice in the stars which
gleam through the night of my life ? Shall I
hate women because they love me ? Is it my
fault that language has only one word for feelings
as different as the fair creatures who inspire
them ? For a long time I was a fool and lived
without all intercourse with women : but Zuléikha
has gained nothing, and I have lost much,
thereby."

" Art thou wiser now, O Mirza ?"

He nodded in the affirmative, and directed me
to prepare the kalem-dan (writing-stand).

He sang and I wrote :

" Mirza-Schaffy, inconstant fickle mind,

Thou changest in thy loving like thy singing !"

" The women love me everywhere I find,

And where I'm loved, to love I am for clinging !"

* * * * *

I could not resist the impulse of ascertaining how the Wise Man of Gjändsha, with his ever ready dialectic, would answer the queries :

“ Worüber so manche Häupter gegrübelt,
Häupter in Hieroglyphenmützen,
Häupter in Turban und schwarzem Barett,
Perrückenhäupter und tausend andere
Arme schwitzende Menschenhäupter.”

Seine.*

But he made shorter work with me than I had expected.

“It is folly,” said he, “to lose time on such matters. The spring from nothing to something is too great. Here is a void which all the wisdom of the wise will never fill up. ‘Such racking subtleties have never yet made fools wise, but they have made many wise men fools. What says Saadi : ‘Even if the clouds rained water

- * “ Whereat have so many wise heads been racking,
Heads in Hieroglyph-caps conic,
Heads in Turban and dusky Barett,
Periwig-heads, and a thousand other
Sweating, pitiful heads of mortals.”—Tr.

of life, and the land overflowed with fruitfulness, thou wouldst gather no fruit from the willow-tree.' Does the sun seem to us less beautiful, because we are unable to penetrate its nature? Does the rose smell less sweetly, because it flourishes best in the rankest soil?

"Verily, yon playing child with his fresh cheeks, is wiser in his simplicity than the hollow-cheeked Hadshi, the devotee with his rolling eyes.

"Life is a struggle between light and darkness, between good and evil, between the beautiful and the common; and he is the wisest man who finds out the most beauty from the slime of the world.

"It is one and the same fire which glows in our spirit, in the sun, in the cheek of beauty, in the leaf of the rose.

"Before this fire worship!"

CHAPTER XII.

AN EXCURSION INTO ARMENIA.

Now follow me into that blessed land, wherein tradition places Paradise, and wherein I also placed it, until I found that it lay in thine eyes, thou, mine Edlitam !

Follow me to the banks of the Senghi and Araxes, rich in bloom, sacred in tradition ; where I sought for rest after long wandering in the mazes of a strange land, until I knew that rest is nowhere to be found but in one's own bosom ; follow me into the gardens where Noah once planted the vine for his own enjoyment and heart's delight, and for the

gladness of all subsequent races of toiling men; follow me through the steep mountain-paths overhung with glaciers, to the arid table-lands of Ararat, where, clad in a garment red as blood, on his steed of nimble thigh, the wild Kurd springs along, with flashing glance and sunburnt face, in his broad girdle the sharp dagger and long pistols of Damascus, and in his practised hand the slender, death-slinging lance of Bagdad—where the Nomad pitches his black tent, and with wife and child cowers round the fire that scares away the beasts of the wilderness—where caravans of camels and dromedaries wend their way, laden with the treasures of the Orient, and guided by watchful leaders in wide many-coloured apparel—where the Tartar, eager for spoil, houses in hidden rocks, or in half-subterranean, rudely-excavated huts; follow me into the fruitful vallies, where the sons of Haïghk,* like the children of Israëï, far from the corruption of cities, still live in primæval simplicity, plough their fields and tend their flocks, and practise hospitality in biblical

* The old and proper name of the Armenians and their country.

pureness : follow me to Ararat, which still bears the diluvian Ark upon his king-like, hoary head—follow me into the highlands of Armenia !

In Paradise we will be happy, and refresh our eyes with a glance at the fair daughters of the land ; and at the grave of Noah we will sit down, the drinking-horn in our hand, a song on our lips, and joyous confidence in our hearts ; for the God, who once, when the whole world deserved hanging, favoured mankind with a watery grave, and suffered only Noah to live, because he cultivated the vine, and rejoiced in love and drinking, will also to us, who cherish like desires, be as favourable as to the father of post diluvian men.

* * * *

The Troika, the Russian team of three, which is to conduct us hence to the mountains, where the roads cease to be practicable, is waiting already before the door. Behind the carriage halt two Don Cossacks as escort, and whilst Luka, our serving attendant, is occupied with adjusting the luggage on the clumsy vehicle, so that we may sit without unnecessary fatigue, we, namely R— and myself, have an

affecting farewell scene with our reverend teacher Mirza-Schaffy.

In the Orient it is a custom, on the departure of a friend, to give him a "convoy-sentence," determined by chance, to take with him on his way. For this purpose the Koran, Saadi, or Hafiz, are commonly used. The book is opened at random, and the first verse that meets the eye, is chosen as the convoy-sentence.

The Wise Man of Gjändsha took the Gjülistan of Saadi, opened the book, and his eyes fell upon the passage where it is written :

"A word without action, is like a cloud without rain, or a bow without string."

After he had given us two copies of the sentence, he accompanied us down to the carriage.

The Wise Man was evidently moved at being obliged to part from his disciples—though only for a month or two. But he endeavoured to hide his feelings by an attempt at pleasantry :

"What says Togrul-Ben-Arzlan ? Yesterday the presence of my friends transported me, and to-day they are leaving me !"

"Allah ssisin illah ! God be with you," he cried

to us as we departed; "Pashol!—Forwards!" shouted Luka's word of command; the bearded coachman clicked his tongue, the knowing horses pricked up their ears with brisk intelligence, and the rugged vehicle rolled away with the speed of fable, whilst the lance-swinging Cossacks rode at a short gallop in the rear.

We soon left behind us the wide mountain-basin in which Tiflis lies, with its baths and gardens, with its confusion of houses and men, of customs, costumes and languages. The mountains encompassing this town, are as arid as heaps of sand blown together by the winds, and bald as the head of a Mussulman.

Once they are said to have abounded with the most luxuriant forms of vegetable life; in shady laurel-groves stood the temples of the beautiful Anahid, the fructifying Goddess—under gracefully arching roofs of pines, the fire burned on the altars of Tleps, the mighty God of Thunder.

But impious hands—so runs the story—profaned the holy places, and awakened the anger of the revenging Gods. Anahid withdrew from the heights her quickening breath, and ruled thenceforth only in her favourite land of Armenia, where offerings

are yet brought to her shrine, and feasts of flowers are celebrated to this day ;—the wrathful Tleps on the other hand, broke the trunks of the trees with his thunder, and commanded fire to spring out of the bowels of the mountains, until all roots were burned, all plants withered, and whatever was blooming perished. Then fled he to his favourite sons, the warlike races of Adighé, who dwell on the eastern shore of Pontus. Since that time no tree grows, no plant thrives, no flower blooms any longer on the arid mountains of Tiflis.

But the farther we recede from the town of the Kyros, and hasten to the Armenian highlands, the richer and more varied in its productions, becomes the well-known, home-like vegetation, that familiarly greets us.

We find here almost exactly the same varieties of plants as in the mountains of Styria, so that I need not detain you long with the description of particulars—but passing the village of Soganlug abounding in naphtha, may take you at once to the famous “Red Bridge,” (called by the Georgians, Gathe-chili-chidi), which connects with each other the banks of the Chram or Debeda.

This very ancient bridge is one of the most mag-

nificent monuments of Georgian architecture. It had originally four arches, supported by gigantic pillars, in whose cavities were apartments furnished with chimneys, anterooms, and all the usual conveniences of the country. In the chambers of the middle pillar, to which belonged two high balconies reaching out over the river, a *duchan* (wine-tavern) was likewise to be found. The balconies are shattered down, the chambers are become uninhabitable, but the old bridge itself, strongly built of red brick, defies the ravages of time.

Already at Muhanly, some hours before we reached the "Red Bridge," we have exchanged the uncomfortable carriage for Tartar horses, on which, notwithstanding the mountains, we travel over eleven German miles,* or seventy-seven versts in one day.

A few versts on this side Pipis, the next station after Arzlandbeglu, we make another halt in the basin of the Dshogas, where nature has struck out in stone one of her most bizarre ideas, in the shape of a remarkable pyramidal tower of rock.

* About fifty English.

asked a tall, broad-shouldered Tartar, with scar-disfigured face.

“After the Sardaar—(Governor)—he is first.”

“He travels too perhaps with a large train?”

“He has fourteen Cossacks with him and two servants.”

“And when will he arrive here?”

“In about an hour, I should think, he will be here.”

“Come, then, we shall have plenty of time to get him decent quarters ready.”

After each question and answer the Tartar had exchanged significant looks with the bystanders, and whilst he was delivering the servant into the protection of two fellows, on the pretence of wishing him to take a view himself of the dwelling to be cleared, the hostile Tartars were already preparing for an attack. Of course it would have been easier to have waited quietly for the General and his train, and to have executed their plan in their own village, but this would have been contrary to the morals and customs of the Moslem. Whoever sets foot on the threshold of a house is sacred and inviolable in life and property; even the most blood-

thirsty robber will not overstep the laws of hospitality. As long as the enemy remains in the protection of the house, no hair of his head will be injured ; only when the master of the house knows him to be out of gun-shot of the place, will he follow and attack him in the open field.

Twenty well-armed Tartars, with the scar-disfigured spy at their head, rode on sure horses to meet the General and his train.

With a wild scream they rushed out from a concealment on their prey. The battle was short but bloody. Of Cossacks and servants not one escaped. The General alone remained, as by a miracle alive. He had defended himself to his utmost, when being struck at the same instant, by a sabre on the head, and by a ball in the belly, he fell senseless to the ground.

The Tartars were yet occupied in plundering their victims, and stripping them naked, when in the distance, a caravan with a strong guard was perceptible. The robbers contented themselves with a hurried booty, and sprang off by sideways in different directions.

I was astonished to hear some time after, from

the mouth of another Russian General, an apology for this murderous deed.

"These fellows," said he, "remember very well from their youth, how on our part their fathers were butchered like beasts, in order by blood to bring up their children 'to lawful obedience;' how can they be blamed then for seizing every opportunity of exercising their right of retaliation. Formerly, whenever a robbery was committed here—which is always accompanied by murder, for it is written, 'thou shalt rob no living person!'—the village lying nearest to the scene of crime, was obliged to deliver the guilty up, or the inhabitants were decimated, *i. e.* every tenth man of them was hanged. In this summary procedure, it naturally could not fail to happen, that now and then a dozen or two Tartars, quite innocently came to the gallows; but the dying Tartar cast the "blood-revenge" on the souls of his relatives and friends, and the blood-revenge is sacred among the men of the mountains."

So much for the necessary completion of our story. In the meanwhile, about half-way between Pipis and Istibulach, we have reached the beautiful fountain, where the caravans which pass by here to Erivan, halt for their beasts to drink,

We likewise indulge ourselves with an hour's rest here, and try to decipher the inscription on the white simply-chiselled stone, which bears the names, birth-places, and genealogies of the charitable founders. Some poet of the country has written the following verses underneath :

“Beneath the shade the fountain is streaming,
The mountain's tear of joy ever gleaming ;
 Splashing light,
 Springs it bright,
Fragrant flowers above,
Down from the stony mountain,
Like a stream of love,
Allah's grateful fountain ;
Wanderer, whom it befriendeth,
Thankful be to him who sendeth !”

At some distance another troop of horsemen had halted, and I saw our Luka engaged in ardent conversation with the chief of the train.

“It is Prince T——, of Erivan,” Luka informed us when he returned, “who also comes from Tiflis, with his train. He wishes very much to make your acquaintance, and offers you hospitality and convoy. May I bring him to you ?”

I deliberated a minute before I said yea, for

under the blue talar of the Prince, I observed a Russian uniform, and I had already lived long enough in the Caucasus, to entertain a well-founded suspicion of all Georgians and Armenians, who had submitted themselves to the glittering yoke of Russian epaulets. I recommended R— to use great precaution in intercourse with our new host, and then said to Luka :

“ It will be agreeable to us to make the acquaintance of the Prince.”

We rose and went a few paces to meet him. Towards us came a high-grown, powerfully-built man, on the verge of forty. He wore the well-known Armenian fur-cap. With his full fresh face, whose regularity was only somewhat marred by the large wine-reddened nose, the thick, pitch-black moustache comported very well. In like manner, a body somewhat inclining to corpulence, was kept in equilibrium by the broad, high-vaulted breast.

Before I make you acquainted with our new travelling companion, I must remark, by way of introduction, that you must not, by an Armenian prince of the usual stamp, understand so illustrious, rich, faultlessly-gloved, and polished a person, as

indeed we are accustomed to conceive of princes in this country.

But it being very well known that among the higher aristocracy less account is made of money and possessions, than of a long extended pedigree; the question is not whether a man is anything, but whether his oldest ancestors were anything; and in this respect Prince T—— might compare with the most illustrious princely houses of Europe; for he traces his descent from King Aram, who, as is well known lived in the time of Abraham, and who, according to tradition, gave his name to the holy mount Ararat. And from all I have learned of the famous race of T——, the ancestors of the Prince, up to the end of the preceding century, have performed deeds of heroism quite as fine as those of the most famous German freebooters of the middle ages.

Whether the prince was of real full blood, I know not; that he was full-blooded, I know. However, you will be able to learn more about him in the course of our journey, and in the meantime must content yourselves with the foregoing notifications.

After we had exchanged the usual salutation of peace : ‘ Szalem Aléchem ! ’—‘ Aléchem Szalem ! ’ which is understood by all the children of the Orient, no matter whether they dwell in the German Ghetto, in the Circassian Aul, or in the palace of the Persian Shah—the Prince asked whether we were the two strangers from the Evening-Land, who had wandered over the mountains for the purpose of investigating the virtues of herbs and the languages of people ?

An answer in the affirmative to this question gave him occasion to indulge in an endless effusion of flattering phrases, on our searching endeavours and extraordinary wisdom, which he maintained was visible in our eyes. In particular the youthful appearance of R., who then scarcely numbered two and twenty summers, excited the astonishment of the Prince.

“ Still so young and already so wise ! ” he cried after every remark of my friend, and then invariably nodded to his followers, who, without the least conception of what was said, were obliged for their master’s pleasure, to look as if they would melt away with amazement and admiration.

At the bottom, the Prince appeared to care but little about our wisdom and eloquence, for he certainly seized every opportunity of giving his own tongue full play. And to his praise, I must here record in his absence, that he moved his tongue with a volubility that to this day tingles in my ears when I think of it. Before everything, he was anxious to give us as high an idea as possible of his influence in the country, of his position and his accomplishments.

If in the flow of his discourse he came to anything that seemed rather too extravagant, or if he thought we might entertain a doubt of his words, he would seize one of his followers by the arm, and ask in an imperious tone: "True, eh!" whereupon a "W'Allah éiladdirr!—By God, it is!" regularly followed.

"Most of my countrymen," said he, "pass their days without ever troubling themselves about progress and refinement. They smoke their tshibug carry on their occupations, go to the bath, eat and drink, marry, beget children, and die. How do I live? I ride to Tiflis;—already I have been now for the third time!—contemplate houses and men,

observe how they live in the great world, wait upon the Sardaar, see the chairs and tables in the great saloons, notice everything, have intercourse with the Russians.—Glorious people that, the Russian !” interrupting himself at this point in the enumeration of the elements of his cultural studies, with a look that was more than ambiguous, and a tone of voice that might be considered at pleasure, as ironical, interrogative, or admiring.

This all-accomodating craft of expression in look and word, I have never found in such perfection as among those Armenians, who, by trade or the gloss of Russian refinement, had become estranged from their native simplicity of manners.

We left Prince T——, who, unquestionably belonged to this flexile uncertain genus, in doubt as to our own view of the glorious Russians, and without any considerable intermission he proceeded with his depicturings of culture.

“It is incredible with what difficulty culture strikes root among the people. And yet we have daily the example of the Russians before us ! Do not Russian officers dwell in Erivan ? Are

not some of them married ? There goes the husband with his wife, walking, and the wife, however beautiful she may be, shows her face to every one who will see it, or if she draws the veil over her eyes, she only does it to defend herself from the sun, or from the wind and weather. Do you believe it ever occurs to our ladies—may God enlighten them !—to imitate the Russians ? Rather would they spring into the water, than go along the street with unveiled faces ; I cannot even bring my own wife to that. You must make her acquaintance ; if she shows any difficulty, we will soon entice her. A lovely creature ! A fine little race altogether, women, when they are pretty and young ; what do you think ?”

We nodded our heads assentingly, and he was manifestly delighted, that on this point our inclinations coincided.

“ Kaitmas ! come hither, boy ! sing us a love song,” cried the Prince to one of his attendants.

Kaitmas, a young man of pleasing exterior, was, as I learned, by trade a shoemaker ; but by his fine voice and readiness in songs, had

attracted the favour of the Prince in a high degree, and always accompanied him on his journeys. He was his care-dispeller and minnesinger.

Whilst I was musing in silent contemplation on the wonderful caprices of fortune, that, almost in all lands, has thrown pitch and poetry so near together, Kaitmas stepped forward in a somewhat affected manner, made a low bow, threw back his wide blue dress, and then began with clear voice to sing :

“ With a load of rich gifts haste I from Gjirdshistan,*

Hasten home to my loved one at Erivan !

Long she waits for me, but its far from her thought

That I long since am on my homeway brought—

As the field of corn with the wind-breath laden,

Heaves the bosom with hope of my lovely maiden !

Jewel bright in the ring of my life’s aspiring,

Thou beginning and end ever onward firing,

Wait in faith—for thou waitest not vainly desiring !”

He paused a moment, and looked at us for our approbation. We accorded him loud praise for

* Gjirdshistan—Georgia.

the beautiful verses, and then re-animated he continued :

“ Have ye seen my fair love, in her beautiful bloom ?
No, never.—Who sees it, woe to him and doom !
For me only removes her veil of disguise,
Only sparkles for me the fire of her eyes,
Only smiles the sweet mouth of my maiden for me,
And flows her hair long as eternity.”

After this brave simile I thought it would be as well to be stirring, for the time was getting on. Before however we set off, the Prince ordered a wine-skin to be opened, with which his sumpter beast was laden. The drinking-horn filled to the brim went round in a circle, and after we had consecrated hospitality by the baptism of wine, the train and the Cossacks took their turn. Then we leaped on our steeds, and trotted away in stately procession.

The Cossacks, well versed in the way, rode in front ; we followed next, with the Prince between us ; and Kaitmas rode at the head of the train.

The mountain region with its manifold changes and charms refreshes the eye ; the sun shines

with the warmth of spring ; the birds are chirping in the trees ; on our left rushes the small but rapid Axtafa, rilling down from the mountain ridge, which rises before us covered with snow, and begirds with its jagged coast the banks of the Sevanga, better known under the name of the Gjoktshai lake.

We ride through the Armenian village, Delishan, most picturesquely situated ; and before darkness comes on, reach the mountain-ridge, hard to be climbed over, where from the dizzy height the Gjoktshai lake, more than five thousand feet above the level of the sea, is beheld deep beneath us, outspread in all its beauty. Five and thirty rivers and rivulets, plunging down from the lofty porphyritic summits, are received into the bosom of the Sevanga, nine miles long and four and a half broad. At the north west end of the lake lies a little wonderfully lovely island, and on it stands a very ancient monastery, inhabited by Armenian monks, who, after their castigations, take a turn by way of change into Hafizian philosophy, and become round and red withal. But of these hereafter. We must hasten to reach

Erivan, and therefore I pass over without notice all the great and little adventures of the way, and lead you at once over Tsinkiang and Nishe-Achti to Adjar, the last station before the capital of Armenia.

There we halt once more. The Prince sends on two riders, to announce us in Erivan, and to order preparations to be made for our reception. He then turns to us, and says in a more earnest tone than is usual with him: "When you make your entrance into the town, the Commandant will immediately send to you, and beg you to stay with him at the castle. But I hope you will not show my door the back, and pass me by! My house is your house; your will is my will! What would the people say, if they heard, that you disdained to be my guests, after I had conducted you so far! What conveniences I can supply you with, you shall have. I have a room in my dwelling, furnished quite in the European style, as at the Commandant's, with chairs, with tables, and board-floors!" Thus did he chatter away in the enumeration of the excellencies of his house, until we had completely set him at

rest on the matter, by saying, that we would in any case lay claim to his hospitality, and that it was of less consequence to us, to see at Erivan European chairs and tables, than to become acquainted with Armenian customs and mode of life.

After a short stay at Ailar, we mounted our horses again, and rode slowly toward the capital of Armenia.

Before the gates, a mass of people had assembled to see the two young pilgrims from the Evening-Land. We were obliged to dismount afresh, in order to return the courteousness displayed towards us, and to taste of the wine and tropical fruits which they brought us; for nothing in the East is considered a greater insult than to refuse what is offered.

The first impression, which Erivan makes on the European, is not very favourable. The streets are unpaved and dirty; the houses are small and low, and moreover hidden behind fence-like, loam-coloured walls; so that the greatest street in the Armenian capital, cannot admit of comparison

with the narrowest lane in any German Krähwinkel. In general the most fabulous representations prevail amongst us of oriental pomp and magnificence ; perhaps because a traveller seldom thinks it worth his while, to depicture the ordinary ; while most content themselves with bringing out into prominence the exceptionally splendid.

We had to ride a good distance to reach the abode of our entertainer ; and if we found the houses ugly on which our eyes alighted, the shape, gait and dress of the young Armenian females, who now and then slipped by us closely veiled, seemed all the more delightful. Prince T—— observed with joyous pride that we discovered satisfaction with the daughters of the land.

“You must make my wife’s acquaintance ; and even to-day,” said he, “I will see what can be done.”

It was a little before sunset when we reached the simple house of our entertainer, with its little surrounding outbuildings. We were conducted into a spacious carpetted room, and were quite happy to shake off the dust of our feet in peace,

and for once undisturbed for an hour, to be able to laugh and chat over the wonderful experiences of the day.

* * * * *

"Do you know," said Luka, who stepped into the room to inform us that we were expected in a quarter of an hour to supper; "do you know why the Prince was so very anxious to have you at his house? He fills a position in the government of the country, and has the reputation of being a great *wsjatshnik*,* on which account the Commandant and Governor-general of the country, both exceptions as honourable men, do not associate with him, so that his reputation suffers much among the people. Now he thinks very properly, if you visit the Commandant and the other authorities, they will pay you a visit in return, and he will then have an opportunity, through your instrumentality, of entering into a closer connection."

"And how do you come to know everything so exactly?"

* *Wsjatshnik*—an officer accessible to bribery.

"That he spends more money than he ought, and only shuts his hand when there is anything in it, everybody in the country knows. Only one cannot just come upon his track, because he is too shrewd, and then again, one dare not proceed too strictly with him, because he has great influence in the country. Besides, they say he is the best man in the world, and if he does not acquire in a straightforward manner all he uses, he at least disposes of it in a straightforward manner. In his house a merry life is kept up all the year round, and to his table everyone is welcome, who has wit and a good stomach."

Luka was interrupted in his account by the entrance of the Prince, who could not conceal his astonishment at finding us dressed anew from head to foot.

"Why have you made yourselves so spruce in the late evening, Agas?" he asked, smiling.

"Because thou didst intimate thy intention of presenting us, even to-day, to the lady of the house," I replied.

"Nothing is to be done with her to-day," he said, apologising, "she is really too timorous. But

you shall see her nevertheless. We must catch her sometime when she comes fresh attired out of the bath. We shall be sure to find an opportunity. Meanwhile come to table, and let us be merry. Kaitmas is there also to sing us something, and I have engaged a couple of musicians besides, jolly fellows, who will please you !”

Our appetite did not fail us, after the exertions of the long day of travel, and we willingly followed the invitation of our merry host.

We entered the dining-room, a white apartment without any furniture ; except a low, table-like stand, with as many stools planted round it as were needful for the banqueters to sit on.

A great piece of thin elastic cake, prepared in the manner of the Jews’ unleavened bread, and called by the Tartars and Armenians *tshoräkj*, occupied the place of table-cloth. The sweet wine of the country was drunk out of a silver-mounted buffalo-horn. Savoury fish from the Gjoktshai-lake formed the principal part of the meal : for it was fast time, just before Easter, and the Armenian Christians hold firmly to the institutions of their Church.

A multitude of people were occupied in serving us ;

one filled the drinking-horn, which was emptied every moment; another changed the plates; a third kept up a continual intercourse with the cook &c.; and there was such shouting, laughing, and joking, that anything like a regular conversation was out of the question. Those servants who had nothing particular to do, considered themselves at full liberty to taste with us. All ate with us out of the same dish, all drank with us out of the same drinking-horn; for the strict separation between master and servant that prevails in Europe, is, in Armenia, as in the provinces of the Caucasus, completely unknown.

The food was conveyed to the mouth altogether without the help of knife and fork. One tore off a piece of the bread table-cloth, dived with it into the dish, and swallowed without much hesitation whatever was thus caught.

We observed with genuine astonishment the virtuosity which wine-drinking developed in our host, as, indeed, in general he seemed to have prescribed to himself an unabatable hilarity as a fundamental principal.

"Kaitmas!" he cried to the shoemaking minne-

singer, when the viands were removed, and only the wine tankards were left behind, "Kaitmas ! old boy, sing us a song in praise of drinking !"

Before Kaitmas obeyed the direction of the Prince, he had first, of all to appease the two musicians, who were squatting in a corner of the room, and keeping up a frightful din, one handling a kind of bag-pipe, and the other a most woeful stringed instrument, their united confusion appearing to excite a peculiar appetite in the Prince, who after the fruitless attempts of his singer to reduce the fellows to silence, was obliged to come to his assistance.

Thereupon Kaitmas began to sing :

" Fill me the drink-horn,

Let us be jolly !

Drinking is wisdom,

Fasting is folly !

" Breathing is drinking

The scents of the zones—

Hearing is drinking

The music of tones !

"Kissing is drinking,
Two drink at a kiss!
Fasting is sorrow,
Drinking is bliss!

"Seeing is drinking
Beauty and love—
Seeming discordance,
Concord above!

"Send round the drink-horn,
Let us be jolly!
Drinking is wisdom,
Fasting is folly!"

And the drink-horn went round in a circle, until we could no longer turn round in a circle ourselves, and all unconscious left the circling world to manage its affairs alone. The wine mounted into our heads, and we mounted to bed, as well as we could.

* * * * *

"Do you know," said I to R., when we were sitting at coffee the following morning and smoking our tshibuq, "I had a singular dream last night."

"Did the princess, I wonder, appear in your dream?"

"No, an old neighbour of mine appeared to me, a good-natured reverend, who, when I was still a wild little youngster and went to school, was wont to repeat, every time he saw me, a wise old dogma. 'Fred!' he would say, 'before everything in the world you must beware what the little word 'too' stands for: too much, too rich, too great, too stupid &c.' The good old man! I have never had any occasion to attend to his dogma; destiny has always played my governess, and shown her favour by cautioning me against the too much, too rich, too great and so forth; but last night, when the old man appeared to me, I was in quite wonderful spirits; he carried in his hand a drink-horn, and——"

"Now dont be sentimental," said R., interrupting me, "else I shall not get a word in, and I must also tell you a dream. I dreamed I was in Stamboul again, and sitting with my old Turkish teacher on the banks of the Bosphorus. High over us spanned a magnificent rainbow, and my old teacher made use of the occasion, to explain to me

why the Turks call the rainbow 'the girdle of Allah.' 'The sun,' said he, 'is the eye of God, and the heaven is his body. All day long Allah looks down and beholds the foolish doings of men on earth; he sees how the pious refrain from wine, in the illusion of pleasing him; how the saints practice mortifications, in the illusion of serving him; him who has made everything so beautiful here below for our joy;—but Allah is too wise to spoil his eternal life with indignation and chagrin; he laughs at everything; and sometimes when he can hold no longer, he clasps the seven-coloured girdle round his body, so as not to burst with laughing at the follies of men.' ”

We both laughed so heartily, that we almost had need of a seven-coloured girdle ourselves.

Prince T——, who just at that moment entered the room, was highly delighted at finding us already at that early hour in so rosy a humour. He likewise began to tell us a merry story, but suddenly interrupted himself with the words: “Stop! there comes my wife across the court to the house; now I will introduce you—be quick and follow me !”

"But we are yet in our dressing-gowns," I said, apologizing, "how can we appear before the princess so?"

"What does that matter? only be quick and follow me, else it will be too late!"

He stationed us behind the house-door, where the princess must come in, and gave us directions to spring quickly forward and detain the illustrious lady, as soon as she should make her appearance.

He had himself undertaken the task of cutting off her return.

A second or two elapsed, and the gallant manœuvre was happily successful. The young princess stood between us, trembling, and with downcast eyes. A slender, charming figure, with luxuriant black hair, but otherwise not remarkable. She wore little yellow slippers, large sky-blue pantaloons, an elegantly cut sarafan reaching down to the knees, and a little Persian morning-cap.

The Prince endeavoured to go through the ceremony of introduction in the European style.

"My wife!" he said, turning to her; "the

young Wise Men from the West!" turning to us.

I was sorry to see the tender creature in this painful situation; I stepped back, and she cast me a grateful glance for doing so, which brought us to a better understanding with each other, than the longest introduction could have done; and light-footed as a started roe, the illustrious lady sprang away.

* * * * *

"Now come!" said the Prince, "I will take you about a little, you have not yet seen over my house. We will go on the roof presently, from whence we can see Ararat, and have the most beautiful prospect in Erivan."

After he had led us through several rooms, each one of which was like the rest, and in which there was nothing to be seen but white walls and many-coloured carpets; we reached the "European saloon," as he called it, of which he had already told us so much during the journey.

A large, oblong apartment with white ceiling,

white walls, and simple board floors. The European element was intimated by a table painted with hideous colours, and by six chairs standing all compact in a corner, as if they were ashamed of appearing one by one.

"Is not that quite European?" inquired the Prince, with a look of complacency.

We nodded in the affirmative.

"Look at the window," he continued, "in all Erivan you do not find such a window! Not even at the Commandant's in the castle, for there they are stained with various colours, and cut round after the Persian fashion."

He then called our attention to the board-floor. But he laid particular emphasis on the brass door-latches, which in Armenian houses are somewhat unheard of. With these door-latches and locks a comical story is connected.

The Prince became acquainted with the use of them at Tiflis, bought a dozen, and ordered some to be fixed on the doors of the "European saloon."

The servants of the house, ignorant of the real intent of the singular machines, believed that the Prince had ordered them for musical purposes; for

every time they were turned, a roaring sound followed in the wide, empty room.

It happened then that in the absence of the master of the house, several concerts were arranged by the domestic *personnel*, with the assistance of the brass door-latches. An old blind Tartar had to sing, and the cook, who was considered an authority in such matters, played the brass door-latches.

The Prince only discovered the musical tendencies of his household, when three locks and latches were broken.

"So difficult is it," said he, concluding a very copious narration of the affair; "so difficult is it to introduce into this country European civilization. But I do not perplex myself on that account, and have brought with me half a dozen new door-locks from Tiflis. I mean yet to see my idea fulfilled, of having the whole house furnished in the Russian style. But it is now time for us to dress. To day is Good Friday, and I must go to church, so as to give no offence to my countrymen. If you will go with me, make yourselves ready,"

We had become sufficiently acquainted before with the Armenian worship at Tiflis, and therefore

politely declined the offer of the Prince, in order to visit the famous Tartar Mosque of Erivan; an object by no means impracticable in provinces under Russian sway, but in the free Islamitish countries only rarely and with difficulty to be attained.

We had, moreover, been favoured with a letter of recommendation from Mirza-Schaffy, to the reverend Mullah; and by the latter, as learned pilgrims, were accordingly received with great friendliness.

The duties of his office obliged him to break off the conversation with us in a quarter of an hour, the call of the Muezzim to prayer, sounding down its warning from the Minaret close by.

It was the anniversary of the death of Ali, and the Mullah had to deliver a sermon on the occasion. He bade us follow him into the mosque, and commanded a servant to bring us pipes and a fire-pan.

“Is it then allowed to smoke in the mosque?” I inquired, astounded at our reverend conductor.

“Why not? What does Allah care about such trifles; faith, moreover, is waning enough already, and if the faithful find the service too harsh and

crabbed, they will no longer come to the mosque. Make yourselves comfortable, sit down on the carpet of devotion, and listen to my sermon !”

We entered a high, beautifully-vaulted hall. The white walls were painted with passages from the Koran ; especially the verse, “ God is God, and Mohammed is his Prophet,” artfully interwoven, struck the eye at every turn.

We took our seats quite in the background. Before us sat, numerously assembled, the faithful Shiites, Persians, and Tartars, in their blue robes and black pyramidal caps. Quite in the foreground crouched, in separate rows, a multitude of old women, clothed in white from head to foot. Young females cannot enter the mosque, for in the Alkoran of beauty and youth the faithful may only study at home.

Supporting itself against the wall straight before us, and dividing the length of the hall, was an open superstructure, where the Mullah had his seat. This erection differed from our pulpit, inasmuch as it concealed in no way the figure of the preacher.

A solemn stillness lay over the whole assembly ;

it was as if one could hear the pearling of the water in the kalljans,* which some old Tartars were smoking in quiet devotion. The Mullah, a fine, powerful man, began the sermon with a loud, far-toning voice, and the calmness of an orator who is sure of success. He related the fate of the children of Ali, a history which I may suppose is known, and therefore need not repeat.

He first described the tormenting death of Ali, the enemy of Moavie, chief of the Ommejjades, how he fell by bribed assassination.

“Defilement,” cried he, “curse and corruption on the heads of the Sunnites, who persecuted and slew him ! Mohammed the Prophet spake : ‘ Ali is for me, and I am for Ali ! Ali is like me, as Aaron was like Moses. I am the city in which all science has its seat, and Ali is the gate thereto !’ So spake the Prophet, but they listened not to his words, and killed Ali, his favourite ! Weep ye faithful ! howl and wail, until all the seven heavens tremble. . . .”

And such a howling followed the exhortation of

* Kalljan—Persian waterpipe.

the Mullah, as since then has never reached my ears. "Hei! hei! hei!" it sounded in woeful tones from all sides, and we roared too with might and main.

"Louder!" shouted the Mullah, who kindled into fire, and followed up his words with the liveliest exertions. "Louder! until the blessed in Paradise hear, where they walk in their streamful gardens, smiled on by the sun-eyed houris!"

And ever louder and woefuller resounded the frightful hei! hei! hei! through the sacred halls of the mosque.

But the Mullah appeared by no means satisfied yet with the terrific howling. His whole body was in such agitation, that the talar which covered him maintained a formal flutter, like the drapery in the statues of the baroque, but grandiose Bernini.

"Here plunged in the murderous knife!" he cried, with his right hand indicating his breast, "and here it came out again all bloody to the light!" he added in lengthened accent, with his left hand pointing to his back. "Lament, and implore that Allah may look down graciously on us, and with fury on our foes! that he may extinguish

them with the glance of his eye!" And again there broke forth a storm of lamentation, as woeful and ear-splitting, as if all the jackals, wolves, and winds of Caucasus were howling for a wager.

The women, with a clash, smote themselves on the face; the old Tartars, with a growl, shoved their kalljans aside, and the "hei! hei! hei!" sounded on in one continuous wail.

The Mullah appeared contented, pursued his history in a somewhat quieter tone, and concluded with a description of the death of Hussein, the son of Ali, how he with all his adherents and all his children, fell by the craft of the dreadful Obéidallah, the friend of Jessaid, of the race of the Omme-jades.

After the discourse was ended, he came to us, and asked us whether we had been gratified with the sermon.

"Never," said R—, "have I heard the like! I have cried like a child with wonder and sorrow!"

"What should we say in thy praise?" I added. "Does the scholar also praise the master, or the child the father? What is all expression to the impression which thou hast made on us?"

The Mullah heard the utterances of our praise with great satisfaction, and before he departed, made us promise we would visit him again.

We then took a hasty view of the spacious and magnificent mosque, which also includes the schools of the learned scribes together with the cells of their scholars. Opposite the great hall where the service had been held, and which is open to the entrance, is another of equal dimensions. From these high-vaulted rooms, a series of cells runs across on both sides, in the manner of arcades. In the midst of the large space thus surrounded rises a thick, very ancient nut tree, under which a fountain springs, and in whose shade more than a hundred men may find shelter.

The gorgeous architecture of this great mosque is indescribable, as also of those which are within the walls of the fortress, and of which one is now changed into a Russian church, and the other into an arsenal. The great cupolas are enamelled all over, and embellished with the most tasteful arabesques; in like manner the *façade* is composed, in the mosaic style, of enamelled bricks covered with a profusion of beautifully delineated festoons and verses from the Koran.

We then visited the learned scribes and their disciples, in their schools and cells, standing open to the court-yard ; and were delighted with the ready reception we met with in all, nor were we wanting in comic scenes.

If you are curious to become acquainted with the inside of an oriental school, place yourself in the court-yard above described, and fancy you see before you a little theatre without curtain and scenes.

In the midst, with crossed legs and clothed in a white garment, squats a long-bearded learned scribe. By his side stands the tall, pearling kalljan, from which he elicits clouds of smoke, cleared off in long pauses ; and round about him, with their legs likewise bent under them, sit the docile scholars, boys of from fourteen to twenty years, who listen to commentations on the delightful, lovely songs of Hafiz, in the same way as our devotees pray after the mystical interpretation of the marriage-song of Solomon.

* * * *

After we had recruited ourselves at home with a moderate repast, we went in quest of Obovian, the well-known conductor of Parrot in the ascent of

Ararat. Obovian is a talented Armenian, who has received at Dorpat a kind of learned education, and brought with him a thorough knowledge of the German and French languages to his native place, where he works with astonishing zeal for the cultivation of his countrymen. He has twenty or thirty children continually assembled at his house, with whom he speaks for the most part in German ; and his scholars had in reality made such progress, that we could keep up quite a fluent conversation with them in our mother-tongue. In Obovian we found a friendly guide to the speedy fulfilment of many visits of duty, which we had to make in the town.

A hearty reception was given us by Colonel von Kiel, the Commandant of Erivan, a German from the Baltic provinces. He reproached us for not having taken up our abode in the castle. "I so seldom have a chance here," said he, "of hearing the sounds of my native country from a German mouth !" We briefly related to him how we had found hospitality at Prince T——'s, and he gave us a fair confirmation of what Luka had told us of our host.

"But to-day you must stay with me, Kinder!" said the Colonel, "I shall not allow you to go away again; and really in this glorious weather you could not find a better place in which to enjoy the day. Here we are in palace of the old Sardars of Armenia, on the highest point of the town. In these same halls resided not long since the mighty Hussein-Sardar of Erivan, who was reduced to beggary by Feth-Ali-Shah, and ended his eventful life in a Persian stable. We will first ramble about and see everything until we are tired, and then in the dining hall of the grim Hussein partake of a German soup."

Travellers skilled in military tactics have often and justly expressed their astonishment, that the simple conquest of Erivan should have given occasion to the Emperor, of styling the conqueror Paskjévitch Erivansky. An easier piece of heroism, than the capture of this town, has certainly seldom been achieved. The situation of Erivan in general, and that of the miserable fortress in particular, afford so few strategical difficulties, that with the proverbial cowardice of the inhabitants, the conquest of the town must be ranked among the simplest military problems.

We visited the Harem of the old Sardaars, which is planted round with trees, and erewhile was bubbled round with fountains; the Russians have changed it into a lazar-house. Where once the fairest Odalisks of Georgia and Persia rolled on voluptuous cushions, and sang the songs of Hafiz, there now lie sickly patients on hard couches, and groan their complaining tones. The many apartments in the palace exhibited nothing remarkable, and were small for princely occupants, who plainly in our time must also learn to cut their coat according to their cloth, as long as they have any cloth to cut. Only a large vaulted hall, whose walls, ceilings, mouldings, &c, are overlaid with mirror-glass, attracted our attention longer. Besides several Persian paintings of illustrious Shahs and chieftains, as well as of scenes from Persian mythology and history, we found here a portrait of Catherine II., and of her supposititious son, the Emperor Paul. The Persian paintings dazzle merely by their wonderful colours. In the composition itself are visible only the rude beginnings of art. Worthy of remark too, are the figures beautifully painted on the walls in the oriental style. In the midst of the airy

hall, which on one side is theatrically parted from the court by only a red silk curtain, springs a fountain ; on the other side, round coloured panes of glass afford a magnificent prospect.

The beautiful court of the castle is intersected with avenues, between which fountains throw up their silver dust.

But enough of these monuments of the unripe art of man ! Follow me to the balcony of the palace ; I will show you a monument from thence, one of the most beautiful that God himself has reared on earth.

In the distance uprises before us the mountain-chain of Ararat. Two towering mountains lift themselves mightily out above all the rest. That to the left, of purely conical shape, is little Ararat, twelve thousand feet high ;—that to the right, with threefold jagged summit, is the majestic mount of Noah, great Ararat, sixteen thousand feet high. A mailed coat of ice, shimmering with wondrous hues, binds his broad shoulders round, and he lifts his head so loftily

upwards, that one knows not whether he belongs more to Heaven or earth.

From the foremost mountains of the chain softly swelling ranges of hills trail hither, running out at last into wide fields of luxuriant beauty; over these a long caravan of dromedaries is just winding its onward way; in the far distance flows the Araxes, scarcely visible to the peering eye; plunder-spying vultures and eagles are gliding in the air; before us lies the magnificent park in massy shade, filled with the perfume of the first flowers of spring; and between the park and the walls of the palace rush the clear waves of the Senghi.

A wonderful feeling of devotion came over us in the presence of this sublime scene. Words may not repeat such a scene, and in general only those readers, who have beheld the like, will fully understand the foregoing intimations.

* * * *

"Now you have played me a fine trick!" cried Prince T——, saluting us as we returned home at a late hour in the evening, "half the

town has been here to see you ; the Governor-general of the country, Russian officers, and all the Mullahs and learned scribes of Erivan. True eh ?”

“ W’Allah éiladdir ! By God, it is !” cried the inevitable attendant, whom the reader will remember from the harangue at the fountain.

We told our host, we had not been able to resist spending the day at the Commandant’s.

“ Do you know what,” he rejoined, “ you have been to-day at the Commandant’s, invite the Commandant to-morrow to see you ! There shall be no lack of eating and drinking ; my whole house is at your service. Your will is my will ; what you command shall be done ! And it would be as well for you to send an invitation to the Governor-general too ; for if we mean to have an entertainment, it makes no difference whether there is a guest more or less.”

We observed his drift, but promised to fulfil his wishes. The jovial drink-horn went round again, and we remained together far on into the late night.

I should write a whole book, if I were to bring before you, even in hasty sketches, all the results of our stay at Erivan. But my limited space bids me be brief, and therefore before we enter on our journey to Etshmiadsin, the seat of the Patriarch of Armenia, I will only relate to you a visit we made to Suleiman Chan, the most distinguished Islamitish prince of the country. Suleiman Chan, the ruler of a great Tartar race, sensible of the impossibility of being able permanently to withstand the Russian Colossus, had submitted himself, not long ago of his own accord, to the white Czar, and since then had fixed his residence at Erivan.

Here he had the reputation of being strict in the maintenance of the usages of his religion, but in other respects a very liberal-minded and cultivated man; and the style in which he received us and carried on the conversation, perfectly corresponded with the favourable opinion we had previously formed.

The great reception-hall, extending through the length of the ancient building, was separated by a silken curtain from the anteroom, where the retinue

of the Prince, consisting of about twenty handsomely attired Persians and Tartars, was waiting. Besides the many-coloured, circular windows which afforded from two sides a fine prospect, the long chamber had no other decoration than the costly Persian carpet with which the whole floor was covered. Round about the wall ran a gorgeous divan, on which we reclined, while the Prince himself sat on a throne-like seat, with his legs, of course, bent under him.

Suleiman Chan, a finely figured man, then about twenty-five years old, moved with an almost female grace and lightness. I pass over the particulars of our conversation, and only remark, that before we took our leave, we had to write some verses for him in remembrance. In return, he presented each of us with a poem, written by his own hand to his beloved, and which appears to me pretty enough to deserve a version here.

TO ZAREMA.

" Say which stars indeed are fairer,
Those at night that sparkle gleaming ?
Or which, like thine eyes of glory,
Even dim the sunlight's beaming ?

" Is the dimple on thy blooming
Cheek, more winsome, danger-bringing
Or thy net-like, captive-dooming
Locks, around me closely clinging ?

" Bülbül* knows not which encloses
Sweetest fragrance for his quaffing :
Whether Shiraz' cup of roses,
Whether thy lips' rosy laughing !

" I—I know which ; but have never
Shared in Bülbül's chance of pleasure
Yet my song shall soon and ever
Ope to me the blissful treasure !

" Whence the tones, so wonder-laden,
Of my song art thou divining ?
See thy silken ringlets, maiden,
Round my captive heart entwining !

* Bülbül—the nightingale.

“Where from strings the minstrel’s fingers
Music-tones so rare are flinging,
Must the song dwell where love lingers,
Must to Beauty’s grace be winging!

“Lo, Zarema! thee regaling,
With thy beauty’s praise abounding,
Fragrance from my song exhaling,
Music from my strings resounding!

“None this fragrant, songful musing
Dares to think indeed of scorning,
Which my love shall deign perusing,
And her eye shall gild adorning!

“Like a seal, thy glance is lending
Merit to my songful duty,
And my song itself is sending,
Like a mirror, back thy beauty!”

* * * * *

When we returned from our visit to Suleiman Chan, we found our hospitable abode besieged by an innumerable multitude of people. Persians, Tartars, Armenians, Gipsies, the whole mass was heaving in pell-mell confusion, and raising a

deafening din of the strangest guttural and hissing sounds, in which the Semitic languages are so rich. We had some trouble to gain the interior of the court.

"Make way!" suddenly cried a high-grown Kisilbashi,* with loud voice, "make way! Here come the Hadshis, the pilgrims of Fränk-jistan!"

Forthwith a broad espalier was formed before us. "Collect yourself," I whispered to R., "here we must cut a princely figure, and represent the dignity of the West."

With measured pace and serious countenance we walked up to the house, now and then saluting very graciously to the right and left, after the oriental custom.

In our apartment we found Luka, who, laughing, gave us the wished for solution of the singular spectacle outside.

"The Prince," said he, "has made it known in

* Kisilbashi—redheads, as those Persians and Tartars are called, who practice the custom of colouring their beards red, which is considered a particular embellishment.

all Erivan, that to-day the Commandant and the Governor-general will dine at his house. Now as this is hitherto an unheard of occurrence, the people have assembled in order to be convinced of it with their own eyes. Many also avail themselves of such occasions, to present complaints, petitions, and the like, which, if forwarded in the ordinary way, seldom come to the right man, unless the way is paved with gold."

Soon after, our guests arrived, but were not, as is usual amongst us, received by the people with loud acclaim, cheers, and so forth, but with profound silence.

The banquet passed off pretty much in the European style, on which account I need not tell you a great deal about it.

The Commandant, a sedate man, who loved before everything a good soup, had taken the precaution of sending his cook ; knowing that a soup according to European taste, belongs to the impossibilities of Asiatic cooking.

The Governor-General, ostensibly out of respect for us, had observed the same precautionary measure

as his gallant friend ; and since both the commissioned professors of the culinary art, in the supervision of the table-furniture, missed several little trifles, such as table-cloths, napkins, forks, and so forth, they took care to supply every deficiency from the service of their masters. Even glasses for drinking the finer wines were procured from the castle, although the inadequacy of wine-glasses at an Armenian dinner was presently perceptible, and the victorious drink-horn resumed its rounds.

It just occurs to me that I have forgotten in my previous depicturings of the table, to make mention of a peculiar custom, which not only in Armenia, but also in Georgia, characterises every drinking bout.

"Allah werdy!—God has given it!," cries the drinker, as he lifts the horn to his mouth.

"Jachshi Jol!—May it go a good road!," rejoins his neighbour.

In ordinary life these words form the standard toast ; but if on festive occasions one wishes to say anything special, the Allah werdy ! must at least serve as the introduction. For example :

“Allah werdy ! God gave us wine,
The soul refreshment lending,
The body strength supplying.

“And Jachshi Jol ! may’st go benign,
Thy thirsty throat descending,
And thee well satisfying !”

Or : Allah werdy !

“Like the nightingales, in rosy chalice sipping,
They are wise, and know they’re by it gladdened !—
Let us deep in wine our wanton lips be dipping ;
We are wise, and know we’re by it gladdened !

“Like the ocean’s foamlets’ rocky cliffs o’erskipping,
When the storm-awakened deep is maddened—
Wine shall break in sparkles o’er our lips bedripping ;
We are wise, and know we’re by it gladden’d !

“Like a Spirit-king, the morning breeze outstripping,
Made of fire and fragrance, earth-unsaddened—
Wine shall through the rosy gateway triumph trip-
ping ;
We are wise, and know we’re by it gladdened !”

* * * *

But I hasten to a conclusion, and lead you away from the cheerful banquet to the monastery of Etshmiadsin, only a few miles distant from the town, and situated on the tableland of Ararat. There the Catholicos, the Patriarch of Armenia, has his seat, with his whole synod, consisting of four archbishops, and eight bishops. Hence all Armenian Christendom is ruled ; here is the Armenian Vatican, and many wonderful legends are connected with the holy walls, whose foundation dates back to the year of our Lord, 300.

Ararat is still inaccessible on account of the thaw which has commenced, and before we enter on our onward journey, we must seek protection in the monastery of Etshmiadsin. In order, however, to venture to sojourn in the holy halls, where a rich treat is promised for us in the world-famed collection of books and manuscripts, it is previously necessary to solicit hospitality from the deputy-archbishop of the Catholicos. The Catholicos himself, Narses by name, almost eighty years old, I had already become acquainted with on a former occasion at Moscow, where he was remaining for some time.

With a brilliant train of horsemen, consisting of Cossacks, Kurds, Tartars, and Armenians, we appear before the walls of Etshmiadsin.

Our friendly guide, Obovian, has the goodness to announce our arrival.

The reverend Archbishop receives us, surrounded by some bishops and monks. R— leaves the address to me.

I step up to the stately old man, kiss his hand, and say :

“Holy Father ! the bird has her nest, and the wild beast has his cave ; but helpless man has not where to lay his head !”

The Archbishop answered : “ Stranger ! what says the poet : when a guest comes to thy house, wash his feet and spread out carpets, that he may sit down and repose at thy hearth. My house is thy house !”

I resume again, and say : “ Yes, reverend Father ! Hospitality makes the desert a garden of roses, but hostility makes the garden of roses a desert !”

The Archbishop warmly presses my hand, and rejoins : “ Stranger ! thou speakest already very wisely for thy youthful years !”

"Holy Father! my wisdom is only a reflection of thine; for thy words fall down upon me sweet as the manna to the children of Israel in the wilderness!"

The old man turns smiling to those around him, whispers something in the ear of a bishop, seizes once more my hand and says: "Young pilgrim! thou scatterest flowers out of thy mouth!"

"Holy Father! what can I do, but walk upon the flowers which thou scatterest before me? What am I to thee! What is a drop to the ocean, what a grain of dust to the desert, what a night-lamp to the sun! Thy will is my will!"

* * * * *

And a princely apartment was made ready for us in the monastery of Etshmiadsin, the seat of the Patriarch of Armenia, on the tableland of Ararat.

CHAPTER XIII.

ARMENIAN VARIETIES.

My sojourn in the monastery of Etshmiadsin, which is situated nearly two thousand nine hundred feet above the level of the sea, and whose foundation reaches back to the first year of the fourth century of our era, is among the most pleasing remembrances of my life.

I cannot join in the blame which earlier travellers have pronounced on the manner in which hospitality is here shown towards strangers. None but friendly and delightful images float before me, when I think of the days I spent within the encircling walls of this time-

worn Christian strong-hold, that stands out in bold advance on Persia and the kingdom of the Osmons.

Perhaps in reality we had to thank the obliging recommendation of the Governor-General, and the friendly mediation of Obovian, that a reception and entertainment were given us, far surpassing all our expectations.

Ever since certain members of the Imperial house, and the (in Russia) all powerful Minister of War, Prince Tshernitshev, visited Etshmiadsin, a portion of the previously monastically simple apartments have possessed a half European appearance. If I do not mistake, our sleeping room was even hung with tapestry. The use of tables and chairs, of knives and forks, of white table-cloths and napkins, is already become known at Etshmiadsin; and the drinking-horns and tankards, elsewhere customary in the country, are supplanted by flasks and glasses.

The table, at which we dined with some Archbishops and Bishops, was furnished with a degree of taste that I have never seen excelled in the most elegant restaurants of Paris; on which account

any description of particulars would appear superfluous here. Only one thing I may remark, that the frequent salutation: "Flowers before your feet!" was no empty phrase, since every morning in our chamber, and every mid-day on our plates, we found a fragrant little nosegay.

Our daily visits to the famous library of the monastery were, unfortunately, in consequence of several circumstances, always but of short duration.

Brosset the younger, known in the learned world by his works on Georgian literature, has edited a catalogue of this library in the French language, and the circumstance that his very imperfect work has yet received no completion, seems to be a proof that the enjoyment of the literary treasures of Etshmiadsin is attended with constant difficulties.

Already in an earlier work* I have expressed myself more fully on the enigmatical appearance, that the Armenian literature, so rich in philosophical, theological, and historical works, has not a single poetical production of importance to show,

* "The People of the Caucasus." Frankfort, 1848.

although the situation and history of the country, as well as the early acquaintance of the people with the Greek and Roman poets, an acquaintance too promoted by means of translations, have afforded so many means of incitement.

On the other hand the hope was indulged by friends acquainted with the country, that I should find, for my collection of popular songs, a rich store, as well among the Armenians, as among the Kurds and Tartars.

I have mainly to thank the zealous endeavours of the excellent Obovian, that this hope does not remain entirely unfulfilled ; for owing to my ignorance of the vulgar-Armenian language, I should have been obliged to limit myself to writing down the few Kurd and Tartar songs, which chance threw in my way, if Obovian had not undertaken to supply me with a collection of all the popular songs to be found in the Sardariat of Erivan. The first part of this collection, written by his own hand, and furnished with a complete German commentary, I received before my return into Europe, with the promise that several similar parts should follow.

These songs, written in the corrupt vulgar-

Armenian, my learned friend, Professor Petermann of Berlin, has succeeded in deciphering to a word.

The collection is yet too small to justify a separate publication, and nevertheless too great for all to find a place here. I confine myself, therefore, to the insertion of that song, which, among those at present in my possession, appears to me the fullest of merit.

ARMENIAN DIRGE.

“ At thy lone grave I am come to be keeping
Sad watch by the stone that guards thee blest ;
O, would the grave open for me to be sleeping
Along with thee in eternal rest !

“ That I, my languishing head resigning
To earth, and my longing soul to thee,
Might moulder away to dust, reclining
In sweetest rest, by the side of thee !

“ I see in the house the walls before me,
Abroad I behold the mighty hills—
A quivering glow runs trembling o’er me,
But cold is the breath my heart that chills.

"The fire of my fading eye doth perish,
The day of my life is darkened for me—
What remained for me here on earth to cherish,
That behind thou didst leave me—not take me with
thee?

"A shadow I wander, in sadness dwelling,
My strength is worn out, and the joy of my years;
Voice only is left me, my grief to be telling,
And eye to flow down with bitter tears.

"Let me, oh let me, from earth, fly and speed me!
My trembling knees knock, my cheek blanches and
fades;
Whither ever the dark powers list to lead me,
I shall find thee again in the kingdom of shades!

"I burn for thee candle and incense upcurling,
And low at thy feet I am kneeling in prayer—
O, would the light vapour, that vanishes whirling,
Take my soul up to Heaven with itself through the
air!

"Why have I yet eyes, sad watch to be keeping—
Why voice, that's for ever lamenting thy doom?
Thou never canst hear me in sadness weeping,
Thou hearest me not in the awful tomb!"

* * * * *

It is easy to see that this *Mimosa sensitiva* among the flowers of Oriental poetry, has grown on a Christian soil.

I pass over narrating the excursions we made from Etshmiadsin into the interior of the country ; neither will I describe the relics and wonderful things which the monastery treasures in its oft-depicted rooms. With the exception of a piece of Noah's Ark, of all the remaining sacred things here shown, such as nails and pieces of the cross of Christ, arms and fragment-clothes of the Apostles, and so forth, I had already seen specimens in sufficient quantity for a new ark to have been built of them with ease.

In the abundance of material to be got through, I have only ventured to select what was most important ; where anything apparently insignificant has found its way into my representations, this has been solely allowed for the necessary completion of the scenes set forth.

Before everything, I was obliged to be careful to avoid repetition ; on much that is here only briefly indicated, the reader, who is curious to know, will find more copious information in my

earlier writings on the people of Southern Russia and the Caucasus.

It lay in my plan that this book should form a well-rounded whole in itself, and at the same time serve as a poetical and animating complement to those writings, whose aim embraced essentially the ethnographical, statistical, and historical relations, civil and military, of the countries between the Black and Caspian Seas.

Both then and now I have studied to make my representations as objective as possible, and personal remarks and occurrences have only been interwoven, when they seemed required for accommodation or completion.

In the same way the depicturings of Nature are only to be considered as the background or frame of the living scenes presented.

* * * * *

With a clear sky and the warmest sunshine, amid the fragrance of flowers and the chirping of the minstrels of spring, we had made our entrance into Etshmiadsin; and when at the end of March we set out upon our journey back through Erivan to Tiflis,

so intense a cold prevailed during half the way, that on the second day we were literally near being frozen to death. The ice of the Senghi was so thick that we might have skated on it with safety ; a layer of snow more than two feet deep covered the whole plain of the Araxes ; and the fruit trees in the gardens, which at our arrival were already in full blossom, had shaken off again their spring adornment, and were letting their heads hang mournfully down in deep winterly attire.

Although sudden changes of weather are not of rare occurrence in the Armenian highlands, yet the oldest fathers of the monastery could not recollect having ever experienced so terrible a cold at this time of the year.

After an affecting scene of departure in the hospitable monastery of Etshmiadsin, during which sweet flowers of speech supplied the want of the snow-covered flowers of the field, we came half-frozen back to Erivan, and resought the house of our Armenian entertainer. The continually increasing cold, and the frightful snow-storms, forced us to tarry a day or two longer than we intended in the capital of Armenia.

We received visits from all the Christian and Islamitish priests of the town, and our portfolio was enriched by many a worthy remembrance. The deficiency of stoves in his house, Prince T—— took care to remedy by fiery wines; and Obovian still favoured us, as far as his engagements would permit, with his, for us, so instructive presence.

It was a great satisfaction to the Armenians to hear from our mouth the praise we bestowed on the teacher of their children; and it delighted them still more to hear the young people themselves talking with us quite fluently in German.

Our acquaintances multiplied from hour to hour, and almost every conversation gave us new insight into the state and manners of the country.

"How do you like our chief district-officer?" inquired of me an old Armenian merchant with a sly look.

"Very much," I replied; "I hear nothing but good of him everywhere."

"Oh, he is a magnificent fellow!" began the

old merchant again: "would to God there were such men everywhere. Strict, I tell you, as the devil; but honest withal, as I have never seen the like in my life; he takes nothing, you may press him how you will; *he takes nothing!*"

The old man streamed completely over in praise of the Erivanshian chief district-officer, and every moment interrupted himself with the expressive words: *he takes nothing!*"

I was desirous of obtaining a commentary on this singular encomium, and the old Armenian gave me a very copious account of a long process between himself and another merchant, concerning a considerable sum of money; and how he was already near losing his cause, when in the consciousness of its rectitude he straightway bethought himself of applying to the chief district-officer, who ordered a strict inquiry to be made into the affair, and had him immediately righted.

"I knew not," continued the loquacious old man, "how to show my gratitude to my brave protector. I took a roll of twenty ducats, and

strove to press it into his hand, as a trifling memorial; 'It is not much,' said I; 'but your Highness may always rely upon me.' "

" Well," I inquired with some curiosity, " and what did the chief district-officer say ? "

" What did he say ? ' Son of a dog ! ' says he, ' dost thou take me for a Wsjätshnik ? I will clap thee in prison, if thou dost not pack off immediately.' And therewith he gave me such a thrust in the back, as sent me head foremost against the wall ; after which he seized me by the arm and kicked me out at the door with the words : ' Stop ! thou rasboinik (robber), I will teach thee to bring thy money to me ! ' Magnificent fellow ! " cried the old man again and again, " such another we have never seen in this country. "

All the company joined in corroborating his sentiment, and of the praise of this marvel of Russian officers there seemed to be no end.

At table we had a story-teller to amuse us with songs and tales. That he might be understood by all, he expressed himself in the Tartar language, which is as current among the Armenians

as their mother tongue. Nay, most of the popular songs of this country are composed in the Tartar language.

Of the stories thus brought before us, the one which called forth the greatest applause, I requested to have repeated once more, and then wrote it down in brief as follows :

ARMENIAN STORY.

A long time ago there lived in Artaxata an old Armenian King, who had a wonderfully beautiful young wife.

Twelve great chests, full of the costliest dresses and treasures, were the dowry she had brought to her consort ; and the number of her female slaves was a hundred and twelve.

And the Queen had a niece, much younger than herself, and surpassingly beautiful, insomuch that the Queen envied her.

The name of the niece was Horoshan ; and that of the Queen, Ripsime.

And the same Horoshan was keeper of the keys in the palace of the King at Artaxata. Eleven keys of the chests of the Queen were under her care, but the twelfth key, and the greatest of all, was kept by the Queen herself, and concealed from the eyes of men.

And a strong desire seized Horoshan to know what Ripsime kept concealed in the twelfth chest; for all the other chests stood free about in the chambers of the palace, but the twelfth chest stood in a secret chamber, and guards were appointed, and no one might venture near on pain of death, when the Queen was in the chamber, which happened about three times a day.

And it came to pass one day, when the Queen with her female slaves was gone to the bath, to have her body anointed and adorned for the holy Feast of Flowers in honour of Anahid, the fructifying goddess, that Horoshan could not resist the impulse of searching through the chambers of the Queen, in order to find the twelfth key, and see what was concealed in the mysterious chest.

And lo ! after long seeking, she succeeded in finding the great key ; in the sleeping chamber of the old King. Ardashir she found it, so hidden that the King himself did not know of it. But the old King burned with strong love for the beautiful Ripsime, and disdained all other women.

And Horoshan hastened to open the chest with the key ; but how great was her terror, when suddenly a handsome young negro rose up therefrom, with limbs smooth as ivory, and black as the tents of the wandering tribes of Ararat. In his ears moreover he wore golden rings, and his hair was as curly as the wool of the sheep in her father's flocks, and his teeth white as the lilies that grow on the banks of the Araxes. And his body was fragrant of nard and sweet scents.

Horoshan would have fled, but the young negro held her fast with his strong arms ; she would have screamed, but she feared lest the King and the women in the palace should hear her. And so she was silent and still.

But the young negro burned for her with

strong love; for she was surpassingly beautiful, and her figure was lovely to look upon, and she was still younger than the Queen.

It happened, however, at the same time, that by a negligence of the female slaves, the shalvari (trousers) had fallen into the water, and Ripsime was angry thereupon and sent two of her female slaves to fetch a fresh pair of shalvari.

And the slaves searched about in the chambers of the palace, in order to find Horoshan, the guardian of the keys; for the dresses of the Queen were kept in the chests, but the keys to the chests were kept by Horoshan, but Horoshan was kept by the young negro, in the secret chamber of the Queen. And the slaves sought, and found her not.

And the rage of impatience seized Ripsime, and she began to abuse the absent slaves with bitter words, and sent two others to seek for the first and bring them before the presence of the Queen.

But Horoshan was nowhere to be found, although at last all the slaves were sent to seek for her.

Then evil suspicion was kindled in the Queen, and she put on her clothes herself, and without shalvari, hastened into the sleeping chamber of her spouse, to seek for the twelfth key—but she found it not. And anger coloured her cheeks with a dark red hue, and she hastened into the secret chamber, where the great chest stood. Horoshan was just engaged in locking the chest again carefully with the great key.

Horoshan was terrified, but she speedily composed herself again, and with the look of maidenly indignation stepped boldly in front of her enraged aunt, planted her arms in her side, and, oh! who shall describe the bitter words that streamed from her sweet mouth.

“Is this the high virtue of my royal aunt, whereof men sing and praise in the lands of Massis-Sar (Ararat), and along the banks of the Araxes and Euphrates! O, unhappy me! that I should have had to seek protection in this house, where modesty and morals are trodden under foot, and the snow of chastity is darkened by the figure of a black negro! Poor Ardashir, faithful husband of thy unfaithful wife! The fairest maidens of the

land sued for thy love, but their looks moved thee not, and cold thou didst turn away from the daughters of the mountains, only to find *such* reward for thy love! O, that I should live to see the honour of Ardashir profaned by my Queen, whom I honoured until now as virtue itself!"

Such was the continuous flow of her complaint, that the Queen had no room at all for reply. Fearing the vengeance of the King, in case he should come to the knowledge of her unfaithfulness, Ripsime used all her endeavours to induce her niece to silence; but in secret she made preparations to remove Horoshan out of the way.

The plan of murder failed, and an innocent female slave fell a sacrifice for the niece of the Queen.

Horoshan, fearing for her life, fled away to a distant mountain-forest, after having in revenge first told the King of the unfaithfulness of his consort.

Ardashir, inspired with deep love for the young Queen, would not believe in her unfaithfulness, until he had convinced himself of it with his own eyes. But one day he surprised her in the secret

chamber, just as she was winding her arms round the negro's neck, and tenderly exclaiming : " May thy head never be separated from mine !"

The King, glowing with revenge, drew his sword, and the head of the negro rolled bleeding at his feet. In the first upboiling of passion, he was going to destroy Ripsime too, but so great was his love for her, that he could not raise the sword against her.

"Thy wish be granted thee, thou faithless one !" he exclaimed, " the head of the negro shall never be separated from thine !" And he commanded the skull of the slain to be set in gold, and a head-ornament to be made out of it for his Queen. That was to be the punishment for her misdeed.

Meanwhile Horoshan wandered alone in the woods, lamenting her unhappy fate. It was the middle of winter, and snow and ice covered the ground. But, O wonder ! wherever Horoshan stepped, flowers sprang forth from the earth ; and wherever she glanced, the winter covering melted away, as before the beams of the sun in spring ; and wherever her breath was wafted, the trees shook down their snow, and blossoms and leaves sprouted

forth from the branches. So great was the enlivening might of her beauty! Even the wild beasts of the wood gambled and bounded for joy at the sight of her.

But her own heart was become a stranger to joy; she felt bitter repentance for the past, and implored the gods to take away her life. Thus she spent her days and nights in grief and lamentation, with no other society than the trees and beasts of the forest; her couch was the damp earth, and her ceiling the blue tent of heaven.

And in wild anguish she brought forth a child; jackals and vultures sang his lullaby. But the child was a deformity, and a continual source of sorrow to his mother.

Still she cherished him with the tenderest solicitude and love; for misfortune had melted all the evil out of her, and she was become kind and full of love like an angel. She no longer wished for death, for her child bound her to life. Years flowed on, and the boy grew up, and with him grew the affliction of his mother.

But not yet had Fate launched all its shafts of terror against Horoshan; the worst was on its way:

she had also to endure the loss of her child, the only thing which bound her to life. After a long sickness the boy died, and the affliction of the mother threatened to become despair.

She had resolved to put a violent end to her existence, and was just on the point of throwing herself down from a high rock, when she started terrified back, at the appearance of a Form of Light that suddenly emerged before her.

And the Form of Light spake to her: "Fear not, O Horoshan! I am Anahid, the goddess of Love! Thou hast profaned my temple, and hast paid the penalty for so doing; but the hour of thy deliverance is at hand. No longer shall earth be a hell to thee. I take from thee the guilt of thy past life, as I have taken it from Ripsime, the Queen. Descend into the valley, and thou shalt walk henceforth in a new life!" And thus speaking, the Form of Light vanished as it had come.

But Horoshan descended into the valley with firm step. And lo! a princely hunter, who carried a falcon in his hand, sprang to meet her, and his eye was dazzled by the grace of the charming woman. . . .

Why should I tell you at length what followed ; enough—the two became man and wife, were blessed with children, and lived in happiness to their latest age.

And Ripsime too, the Queen, saw yet many happy days. Seven years she had paid the penalty of her sins. Then the heart of King Ardashir opened again to his old love ; and he took from the head of Ripsime the negro's skull that was set in gold, and buried it deep in the earth, and said : " So also let all hatred between us be buried ! "

And when the two women, after long separation, saw each other again, they knew not how to praise their mutual joy enough.

For Fate had cleared the garden of their hearts from every weed, and only the flowers of happiness were left remaining there.

* * * * *

And now we say farewell to the chief town and high mountains of Armenia, to both the Ararats and to Allagés, and return to Tiflis and the School of Wisdom.

Scarcely an hour before our departure from Erivan, two Mullahs,—each followed by an Adam (man-servant), bearing a kalljan and fire-pan,—came riding up, to bring us letters for Mirza-Schaffy, who appeared to stand in high esteem among the learned of this country.

The convoy-sentence, which we took with us this time on our way, was again taken from the Gjülistan of Saadi, and ran :

“None would himself to owls, as guardians, be for giving,
Although, in all the world, there were no eagle living.”

So we departed. But if our journey hither had been difficult, our journey back was infinitely more so. In particular, during our passage over the mountains of the Gjoktshai-Lake, which was now frozen hard, we were more than once near perishing with cold, or sticking fast in the snow, as a whole caravan of camels with their leaders had just done,—caravans, camels, and leaders being all buried under the bottomless masses of snow that had rolled down from the mountains. With affrighted eyes we still saw the traces of this dreadful catastrophe.

But let us turn our looks away from such scenes of horror; instead of making you share in the hardships of the difficult route, I will rather tell you of some peculiarities of the country, to which from the heights of the Jshekj-Meidan (Ass's-place, here Ass's-ridge), we gave our last farewell.

Follow me into an Armenian village. We see here the same dirty, rudely thrown-up, half-subterranean houses, as we have become acquainted with in Georgia. Before each house stands a carefully piled-up, conical tower, of from twelve to twenty feet in height. This tower, compacted together of filthy straw, and all the rubbish of house and stable, forms the usual fuel of the family. When this Kisljak* has been dried by wind and sun, and reduced to a turf-like mass, the daily supply for the house is scooped out, and the breech, thus made, filled up again immediately.

If in the outset it is but little calculated to stimulate the appetite, to see so uncleanly a combustible employed for baking bread, and for the purposes of cooking, a much more disagreeable impression is

* Its Tartar name.

made by observing that the building up and support of the Kisljak-pyramid mainly devolves on the Armenian women.

Let any one imagine these delicately-formed, and in comparison with their poor habitations, very elegantly dressed countrywomen, clad in their yellow shoes, red pantaloons, short gowns, and long veils, and busied on the Kisljak-pyramid. This spectacle was afforded us every time we passed through an Armenian village. Fortunately, kissing the hand is not one of the customs of the country.

Crawling now into the interior of an Armenian cottage, we may think we are transplanted all at once back to the time of Abraham. Among the wealthier people is to be found a separate chamber for the female part of the family; among the poorer, who form the great majority, the hut consists only of one large room, where the family is separated from its domestic animals only by a cross-beam. Of windows, tables, chairs, &c., there is of course no trace to be found. The light falls through an opening in the roof; the loam-hardened floor is

covered with straw, and the mats, spread out upon it (among the wealthier carpets), serve at once for chairs, beds, and sofas.

In the middle of the women's apartment there is generally an opening, lined with stones, where the bread (*Tshoräkj*, *Lavashe*) is baked.

These short indications for the description of Armenian village-houses may suffice. The reader would find little satisfaction in following me through all the unpleasant particulars.

I conclude this chapter by adducing some examples obtained on the spot, of the superstitions prevalent among the Christian and Islamitish population of Armenia.

I. SUPERSTITIONS OF THE ARMENIANS.

If any one keeps his hand in his pocket before thee, thy wife is unfaithful.

If a woman put on the head-dress of a strange man, though it be only in sport, all her hair will come off.

The chamber of the sick is always inhabited by angels. Therefore every one who enters must, before he sits down, take up the Tshengjir (or three-stringed Balalaika), that stands by the couch, and play a few tones in order to please the angel. Further, the room must be adorned with shawls and costly stuffs, on which the angel may sit down. Moreover, it is a custom well-pleasing to God, to present the angel from time to time with refreshment, if it be only to show good-will; for as the invisible angels do not need earthly enjoyments, it is sufficient to hand round a plate of sugar, sweet pastry, and fruits; to bow profoundly in every corner of the room, and then to taste a little of the fruits one's self.

II. SUPERSTITION OF THE PERSIANS AND TARTARS.

If thou findest a horse with two white feet, spare even thy enemy, and give it not to him! But if thou findest a horse with four white feet, send it to

thy friend ; one with three white feet, give it to thy son ; but if thou findest a horse with one white foot, or without any mark in the feet at all, keep it for thyself !

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SCHOOL OF WISDOM.

Concluded.

WE are again at Tiflis, and sit assembled round Mirza-Schaffy, in the Divan of Wisdom.

How had the Wise Man sighed for our return from the land of Haïghk ! and how glad he was to see us again after our long separation !

Several weeks passed away before our instruction resumed its usual course ; so much was there to be done, in asking, relating, and explaining.

We deciphered together the inscriptions collected

on our journey, as well as the Tartar songs of the blind bard Keshi-Oglu, of which Obovian had procured me a small compilation.

Some little presents, which we had brought with us for the Mirza, from the bazaar at Erivan, were responded to by a number of sheets in his own handwriting, entitled: "The Key of Wisdom," containing our teacher's entire views of the world, partly in short, pithy sayings, partly in longer essays.

Before we began to read these under his direction, we had to give him a short description of our journey. Extraordinarily was he delighted with the passages, wherein we remembered with praise the merry drinking bouts at Erivan, and the virtues of the Armenian wine (which is something like the Monte Pulciano drunk at Rome).

"What says Hafiz?" he cried:

"Taste the maiden's kiss that gladdens,
Freshen thee in wine that cheers—
Mingle not with aught that saddens,
Youthful tricks suit youthful years!"

When we came to speak of the uncleanly occupations of the fair Armenian villagers, and of the

construction of the Kisljak-pyramid, his countenance darkened, and he was of opinion that these pyramids were monuments of shame for the men, who degrade their females to such work.

"Defilement on their heads!" he exclaimed, at the conclusion of a long commentary, wherein he had shown, that women can never be ranked highly enough, and that men are always and everywhere themselves to blame for the weaknesses and deformities of the fair sex.

"How can the rose grow," he cried, "without sunshine! How can the violet bloom on the salty soil! Lo! women are flowers, that are always becoming more beautiful and fragrant, the more they are guarded and cared for. But men should be keepers in the garden of beauty; they may rejoice themselves in the fragrance of the flowers, but they may not rumple them with rude hands. Just as the weed is rooted from the flower-bed, so should all that is base and common be removed far away from the neighbourhood of woman!

"Tread upon the rose with thy feet—and its thorns amaze thee; watch over it with love and

care, and it will bloom and be fragrant, an ornament to itself and thee.

“ Make thyself of thine own accord a slave to a woman, and she will not bear it, but will herself bow before thee, and in thankful love look up to thee as her lord; make a woman by force thy slave, and she will bear it still less, but will seek by craft and cunning to obtain dominion over thee. For the empire of Love is the empire of contradictions; the wise man marks this, and acts accordingly !”

He sipped down a glass of wine, ordered a fresh pipe to be brought him, and began to speak of other things. But I interrupted him and said : “ Thy words sound sweetly, O Mirza-Schaffy ! I also willingly read in the Koran of Beauty; therefore continue thy teaching concerning woman !”

“ Thy request breathes wisdom,” replied the Mirza, “ therefore I willingly lend the ear of approval. For the more one has to do with women, the more one learns to know them; and the more one learns to know them, the more one learns to

love them ; and the more one loves them, the more one is loved again—for every true love finds its response, and the highest love is the highest wisdom.

“ What is there in the world of higher excellence than woman ? What are all our airy dreams of the Houris in Paradise, to these beautiful realities on earth ?

“ Ask the people of Rumeli, what is the highest excellence in the world ? and they answer, the Sultan ! Put the same question to the people of Fanzistan, and they answer, the Shah ! For the Sunnites consider the Sultan, and the Shiites consider the Shah as the shadow of Allah on earth. But what is semblance to reality ? What is shadow to substance ? And verily I say unto thee : women are the substance of Allah on earth ! They are the supportresses of life, the pillars of grace, the jewels in the crown of happiness. He who takes part with them, is richly dowered. A kiss given to the hand of beauty, is a better cordial than the enjoyment of the costliest viands ”

“ But the hand must be purer than the hands of the fair villagers of Armenia, O Mirza ! ”

"Thou speakest unwisely, O youth ! for this is just the most wonderful element in the nature of women, that the wise man can make everything of them. Therefore do all the vices of woman only flow out of the false treatment of man. Accustom a woman to have her hands kissed, and her hand will always be clean and pure ; kiss her foot—and she will cherish her feet with the most feminine care !"

So inspired the Wise Man had never been, as he was this evening. There was no end to the praise of woman. Already for some time I had been struck by his wholly altered manner. The old pensiveness on his countenance had given place to an agreeable expression of joy and contentment.

My conjecture that his heart had opened anew to love, and that behind that moonlight scene, wherein I had surprised him, something more lay hidden than a transient passion, was fully confirmed.

He was wandering, but abated none of his good humour, when I roused him from his reveries, and called him back to the order of the day. Every pause in the instruction was filled up with singing ;

every wish, every explanation, was embellished with a verse or two.

He seized hold of the flask ; the flask was empty. "Let us have wine !" he cried, "what says Hafiz :

" Maiden bring wine,
For on us doth shine
Now the bright time of roses !
The path we pursue,
Of repentance anew,
Overstrewn is with roses"

"Mirza-Schaffy," said I, interrupting him, "thou art in love from head to foot ; confess it now, I see it in thy whole being !"

"Thou art right," he rejoined, smiling, "the world again appears to me in the rosy light ! What says Hafiz :

" On the boisterous sea,
I was roving the free,
Braving danger around—
But the danger is over,
And the toil of the rover,
When the pearl he has found !"

And again I interrupted him : " Why dost thou not sing thine own songs, O Mirza ? I can always read the delightful songs of Hafiz, but thy voice I can only hear so long as I am with thee ! "

He nodded approvingly, bade me prepare the kalem-dan, and immediately began to sing :

" To one exalted aim we both are tending,

I and thou !

To one captivity we both are bending,

I and thou !

In my heart thee I close—thou me in thine ;

In twofold life, yet one, we both are blending,

I and thou !

Thee my wit draws—and me thine eye of beauty,

Two fishes, from one bait we are depending,

I and thou !

Yet unlike fishes—through the air of Heaven,

Like two brave eagles, we are both ascending,

I and thou ! "

" Thou art not writing though ? " he interrupted himself suddenly.

" Certainly I am ; thou didst tell me to do so ! "

" But thou shouldst not write such nonsense !

I was only cooling myself down a little ; for nothing is more difficult than to make rational verses when one is in love !”

“ But when they *are* successful, they are something extraordinary !”

“ According to the nature of the soil they grow on ! Now write, I will sing :

“ Thus sings Mirza-Schaffy : we will of danger

Never be fearing—

But amid wine, love and roses bid adieu to

Grief disappearing !

“ Let false-heartedness dwell with the haughty,

Vice with the foolish—

We will, a kindred and genial band, each

Other be cheering !

“ Freedom’s forerunners, storming the shrines of

Old superstition—

Truth’s fore-announcers, truth that to all shall

Soon be up-clearing !

“ Our’s is a brave sword, sharper than the sharpest

Sword of Damascus—

And where it strikes, on the eyeballs of the blinded,

Light shall be peering !

“ Sun, moon, and stars all down we will tear, their
 Fire shall be glowing
 Bright in the song, and incense-flame from beauty’s
 Altar be rearing !

“ Thus we will wander, and speed the glad message ;
 Nothing henceforward
 Us shall entangle, but dark eyes and locks, aye
 Beauty endearing !”

* * * * *

Here we must let the curtain fall over Mirza-Schaffy, and close the School of Wisdom, in order not to overstep the space marked out, and also to do justice to the remaining events of our travel.

When a panorama is exhibited of appearances so manifold and heterogeneous as this book presents to the reader, each picture can only expect a small frame.

But should my reverend teacher, after the slight sketches of him I have here thrown off, find many friends in the West, I should not be at all disinclined hereafter to bring him before the

world in all his greatness, and to devote a separate book to the Wise Man of Gjändsha. For such a work, his many yet untranslated poems, his "Key to Wisdom," his long correspondence with me, and his last love story, would supply me with abundant material.

In the course likewise of these leaves, we shall often have occasion to think of Mirza-Schaffy, since his relations to me were of influence on all my later experiences in the Orient.

He was the means of my acquaintance with the most famous learned men in the provinces of the Caucasus, and in particular with the Wise man, Omar-Effendi, of whom honourable mention has already been made in the earlier chapters of this book, and with whom, in my journey through the Pashalick of Achalzich, I had to maintain a poetical contest of wisdom, whereof the reader will find a short description in the following pages.

Here, previously, a little poem or two may find place, as echoes from the School of Wisdom, and as passages to new wanderings.

I.

Yellow rolls at my feet the Kur* with a roar,
And dancingly goes away gliding;
Smiles the sun and my heart, and the landscape all o'er—
O, would the delight were abiding!

My love fills my glass with the red Kachetine,
O'erspangling the brim it is hiding;
And I drink with the wine her glances in—
O, would the delight were abiding!

The sun goeth down, all is darkening fast,
But my heart, like the star of love, gliding
In glory, shines brightest when daylight is past—
O, would the delight were abiding!

To the Black Sea rushes of thy dark eyes
The stream of my love to be hiding;
Come, maiden, it darkens and no one spies—
O, would the delight were abiding!

II.

The golden sun is shining,
Down on ocean's streams;
And all it's wavelets trembling
Sparkle back his beams.

* Kur—Kyros.

Thou mirrorest thyself in,
All my spirit-gleams,
And the ocean of my songs doth
Sparkle back thy beams !

III.

I feel thy breath of roses,
All round me fragrance flinging,
Whate'er my vision vieweth,
With that, thy form is clinging !

In memory's sea thou settest,
Night on my spirit bringing ;
But like the sun thou risest,
Again in beauty springing !

CHAPTER XV.

TOUR THROUGH THE PASHALICK OF ACHALZICH.

A VIOLENT bilious fever, which threw me on a sick bed in the early part of the summer, and which the physicians pronounced to be incurable in the hot, dry climate of Tiflis, obliged me to leave the capital again for a longer time, and seek for cure in the strengthening mountain-air.

Mirza-Schaffy, who ascribed the aggravation of my disease solely to the remedies employed, counselled me to visit, in company with him, the crown-garden on Mount Sololaki, and there to replenish my stomach with the fruit of the

mulberry-tree; the partaking of which would immediately dispel my complaint.

Mount Sololaki, one of the most beautiful points of the city, bears on its broad back the remains of the ancient stronghold Narikalé, connected by a long wall with the castle Shahi-tacht (Throne of the Shah) lying in like manner in ruins, and calls to mind the evil times, when Georgia trembled beneath the dreadful sway of the Persian kings.

From the heights of Sololaki the eye rejoices in a prospect surpassing even that from David's mountain in magnificence. Thence one looks over the great plain of Didubeh; and between the Kyros and the mountain-ridge of Soganlug, the most beautiful gardens of Tiflis lie outspread beneath. But above all, the crown-garden itself, with its luxuriant vegetation and terrace-like slopes, commanded by high walls, produces a magical effect.

I had already become quite used to the life of Tiflis, and yet it was astonishing how completely strange and unusual everything appeared, when for the first time after a long confinement, I

left my secluded chamber, and in company with Mirza-Schaffy entered upon my pilgrimage to the mulberry-trees in the garden of Sololaki.

It was between six and seven o'clock in the morning. The streets were beginning to give signs of life, the workshops and warehouses were being opened ; from one quarter, two drosky-drivers, driving to the baths with ladies closely veiled, shouted at us their loud Kabadah ! (make way !) ; in another, our road was blocked up by tall, haggard Imerethians, who were urging before them beasts of burden, loaded with huge double skin-bags filled with water ; at last we descried the old fortress Narikalé uprising before us ; and when, in order to shorten the way, we climbed over a series of houses, hanging one on another in the form of steps, we found on some roofs the fair tenants still in deep sleep under the open sky, whilst on others the bedding had just been taken away.

Arrived at the crown-garden, we reposed awhile in the shade of the lofty nut-trees ; for the power of the sunbeams was already great ; and then, with Mirza-Schaffy's help and guidance I mounted

a mulberry-tree, to seek recovery in the enjoyment of its fruit.

The climbing up, as well as the hanging and trembling in the wavering branches, was not very agreeable to my enfeebled frame; but the Wise Man of Gjändsha insisted on my plucking the fruit with my own hands, if it were to bring about my cure; and I was obliged to submit to his will.

But in spite of this cure of wisdom, my sickness acquired a more and more unfavourable character; and it was only some weeks later that my health was completely restored, in the lovely mountain-wilderness of Priutina, the summer residence of the Caucasian Governor.

Accepting the friendly invitation of the Governor's wife, Frau von Neidhart, I spent the hot months at Priutina, among charming ladies, fragrant flowers, mountain-air, and forest-green; and, strengthened anew in body and soul, set out hence in the direction of Manglis on my tour into the Pashalick of Achalzich. The journey was performed on horseback, as the nature of the way required; and my retinue consisted this time

of Giorgi, my servant, a cunning Armenian, well acquainted with the languages and customs of the Transcaucasian provinces, and two Don Cossacks as escort.

The mountain-path which leads from Priutina to Manglis a journey of only a few miles, is full of all sorts of charms. Precipices crowned with castles, mountains girded with woods, alternate with green dales and lovely distant views.

It was already late in the day, when I arrived with my lance-bearing train at Manglis, the headquarters of the Tifisian Jäger-regiment. In the absence of the Commandant, Colonel Belgard, I was received in the most friendly manner by the Georgian Prince, Shalikov, who was in the Russian service. Tired by the long ride, I deferred all farther advance till the following day, and spent the evening in familiar conversation with the Prince and several other officers who had joined our company.

My first excursion, on the following morning, was a ride through the military colony of Manglis, which is of tolerably wide extent. I fancied myself transported to a village of the rich Volga

provinces, so clean and spruce did everything look that met the eye. The dazzling white houses, built entirely in the Russian style, and standing in the midst of the dark umbrageous mountains, that surrounded and overtopped them on all sides, formed an exceedingly cheerful picture. Every house was encircled by a little garden prettily fenced out, on whose beds, as in all places where the Russian hand cultivates the earth, the cabbage played the first part. Knowing very well, how extremely little the Russian Government in general cares for the well-being of its armies, I could not forbear expressing my astonishment at the comfort which displayed itself around me.

"If the soldiers had nothing but their pay," replied an accompanying officer to my sentiment, "the poor devils would have hard work to live so well as is actually the case, here, and in most of the other military colonies. But the colonists are all married, and among the women there are, as you see, many fresh vigorous creatures; so that a great deal is earned by the way. It is a praiseworthy quality of these women, that they do not expend the money, thus acquired, on

useless finery, but on the improvement of their households."

After an inspection of the military colony, the great barracks, and the other crown-buildings, we found there was yet time for an excursion to the ruins of old Manglis, lying at the distance of a few versts from new Manglis. Leaving the high road, we entered a tall, shady fir-wood, and soon reached a mountain-path, grown about by wild luxuriant shrubs, and overtopped by lofty defying crags, and so difficult of passage, that both we and our horses, as we led them after us by the rein, in climbing over the rugged blocks of rock, which on all sides obstructed the way, were thrown down several times and slightly hurt. Nevertheless, by Nature's magnificent spectacle that ravished the eye at every turn, we were abundantly rewarded for the trouble of the way. To our right the rapid Alghet rolled his foaming waves, here rushing round the roots of swinging bushes, there round the moss-grown masses of huge rocks that breasted and defied the surge. His waters shone and shimmered of all colours, tremblingly reflecting the image

of the mid-day sun, and the bloom of the flowery banks.

To our left, as far as the eye could reach, gigantic, fantastically jagged cliffs up-towered to a great height ; and the chasms that these enormous strongholds, reared by Nature herself, had left, were filled up by the hand of man. For not always had these fruitful, richly-watered vales, these sheltering ravines, been so forsaken as now. A mighty race once housed amongst them, whose deeds still live in the legends of Georgia. On the solid rock the ruins are standing yet of the towering walls by which the people dwelling below were once defended against the inroads of the plundering Lesghians ; still may be seen the remnants of ancient fortresses and castles, hanging like monstrous eyries, to the leaf-embosomed hills. From the rocky precipices themselves, men have here with astounding perseverance boldly cut out defence and habitation. Quite small openings, hidden behind thick bushes, and invisible from below, lead to spacious grottos and chambers ingeniously chiselled, some of which are from six to eight feet in height, and are hewn

from thirty to forty feet deep in the breast of the mountain.

With unspeakable toil we climbed up the steep mountain-wall, in order to observe some of the wondrously fabricated dwellings more closely ; and returning thence into the ravine of the Alghet, remounted our steeds there waiting below, set off straight across the tearing flood, and in the course of half an hour reached the ruins of Manglis on the other bank, the object of our expedition.

Of the many structures which are said to have once stood here, where in Wachtang-Gurgasslan's time was the seat of a Georgian bishop, I only found, besides the ruins of crumbled walls, a church in tolerable preservation. This church, noteworthy on account of its great antiquity, is said to have been built in the first half of the fourth century, during the reign of King Miriam II. Like most of the old churches of Georgia, it is of small compass, and decorated inside and out with a variety of arabesques and inscriptions. As I entered within the sacred precincts, a full-fed herd of cows bellowed me

a roaring welcome. For such a reception I was not prepared ; and tolerant as I am with respect to church-affairs in general, my spirit was fairly stirred within me, when I saw the house of the Lord converted into a cow-stall. Subsequently indeed I became accustomed to these sights, having found oxen and sheep in temples and palaces more frequently than not. The Russians, who themselves only build in order to make ruins, have little veneration for the monuments of antiquity. The inscriptions and images of saints were gnawed and rubbed off round about me by the four-footed beasts ; one inscription only I succeeded, with the help of Prince Shalikov, in distinguishing and deciphering. It is to be found over the portal, carved in stone, and worded in the old Georgian church-language, and runs in translation as follows : " Lord have mercy on the founder of this church, Archbishop Arseni of Manglis : the 2nd February of the year 860." This date does not agree with the commonly received statement, that the church was built as early as the time of King Miriam ; for this Prince

died, as is well known, in the first half of the fourth century.

After I had traced out an accurate sketch of the picturesque ruins of Manglis, we partook of a dinner prepared in the Georgian style, with the swelling turf for our carpet. In this repast the pillau (here called plov) so much liked in all the Orient, and the shashelik (a mutton-fry roasted in small pieces in its own fat), as well as sundry sweets, amongst which I must make particular mention of "preserved rose-leaves," played the principal part; the wine was drunk out of the old-established Caucasian drinking vessels, viz., out of the great silver-mounted buffalo horns. I have already found occasion to praise the virtuosity of the Georgians in wine-drinking.

A genuine Georgian dinner is always concluded with singing, and accordingly the friendly Prince had taken care to surprise me, by introducing an old blind minstrel, who seasoned our rural meal with Tartar love-songs.

Having returned to the hospitable barracks of New Manglis, by a shorter and more convenient

route than that by which we had come, I made preparations for continuing my journey on the following morning.

Beyond the high mountain-chain, embosomed in foliage, crowned with pines, and called by the inhabitants the "yellow mountains," over which the road leads from the basin of Manglis to Zalka, the vegetation acquires a poorer and colder character, and the country becomes continually more waste and solitary, the further we recede from Manglis.

The sun was already near his going down, when the village of Zalka, inhabited by Armenians and some Greeks, among whom we had rested for about half an hour, disappeared behind us, as we rode on to reach the fortress, which receives its name from the village, and is called by the Russians Nazalsky-Redut, still distant from us about ten versts.

"Is that an Armenian girl?" I asked my servant, whilst I cast an admiring look at a most lovely young female figure coming along the road.

"I think it is," answered Giorgi: "her dress

bespeaks it, though her face does not. Such beauties are rare among the Armenians in this part of the country. What a charming creature!" continued he smirkingly, "what eyes! Such a glance goes through one's soul. Just see! she is looking up again. By St. David! she might be a maiden of Guria."

"Are the maidens of Guria so beautiful?" I asked smiling.

"And do you not know that, Effendim?" cried the fellow with a look expressing half astonishment, half contempt of my ignorance. "Then of course you do not know the story which explains the cause of this beauty?"

"No," I replied, "and if you know the story, you can tell it me as we ride along."

"I know it? Who doesn't know it, I wonder? Begging pardon, Effendim, I will begin at once."

I told the Cossacks to ride on, in order to announce us at the fortress, and get ready a lodging for the night; held back my restive steed, so as to keep in the same step with the gentle beast of Giorgi; and the latter forthwith began in weighty tone:

THE TALE OF THE FORTY VIRGINS.

Once on a time, Allah wished to people Paradise with fresh Houris, for the joy of the Blessed ; and to this end commanded an Imam to go about among the daughters of men, and bring to heaven the forty most beautiful virgins he could find on earth. The holy father understood beauty, and conscientiously fulfilled the commands of Allah.

He went towards Fränkijstan, and came to the land of the Inglis (England), and stole the blooming daughter of the King. The King would have slain the bold plunderer, but Allah flashed mire upon his head, so that his eyes were darkened.

The Imam sailed over the great water, and came to the land of the Némtshians,* where many maidens suffered themselves to be allured by his fine dresses and sweet words, and followed him. At the end of a year the sacred number was complete, and he returned over the black and white waters into the East.

* Corrupted from the Russian Njemetz (a German).

Fortunately he arrived with his virgin-band as far as Guria,* but there the Evil Spirit moved him to fall in love with one of the promised Houris, and by the sinful consequences of his love to make her unfit for Paradise.

In vain he sought about among the beauties of the land; he found none who could supply the place of the violated virgin, and one was wanting to the sacred number. Filled with remorse and despair, the Osmanli pierced himself through with a dagger, to escape the wrath of Allah; but the beautiful maidens remained in Guria, mixed with the children of the country, and brought forth a race more beautiful than the old.

* * * * *

Meanwhile it was become pitch dark, for, in the East, night follows day without the sweet interval of twilight; a cold, cutting wind blew down from the mountains; we drew our bashalik† close over our

* Guria, bounded by Mingrelia, Imerethia, Achalzich and Asiatic Turkey, is a blooming little province, on the east coast of the Black Sea.

† Bashalik—a warm covering for the head, used in the Caucasus.

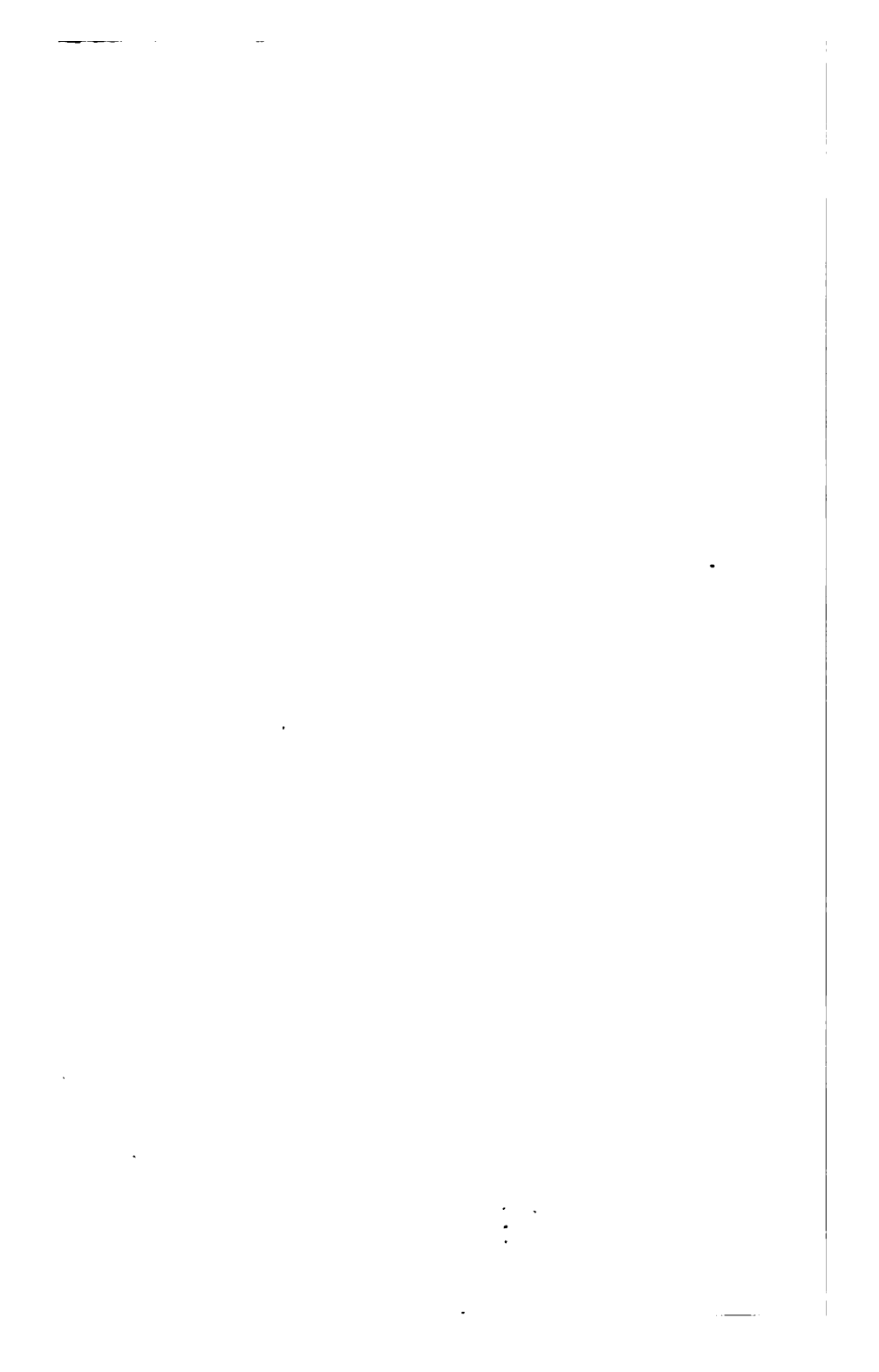
ears, pressed our heels into the flanks of our horses, and galloped off at full speed through the stormy night.

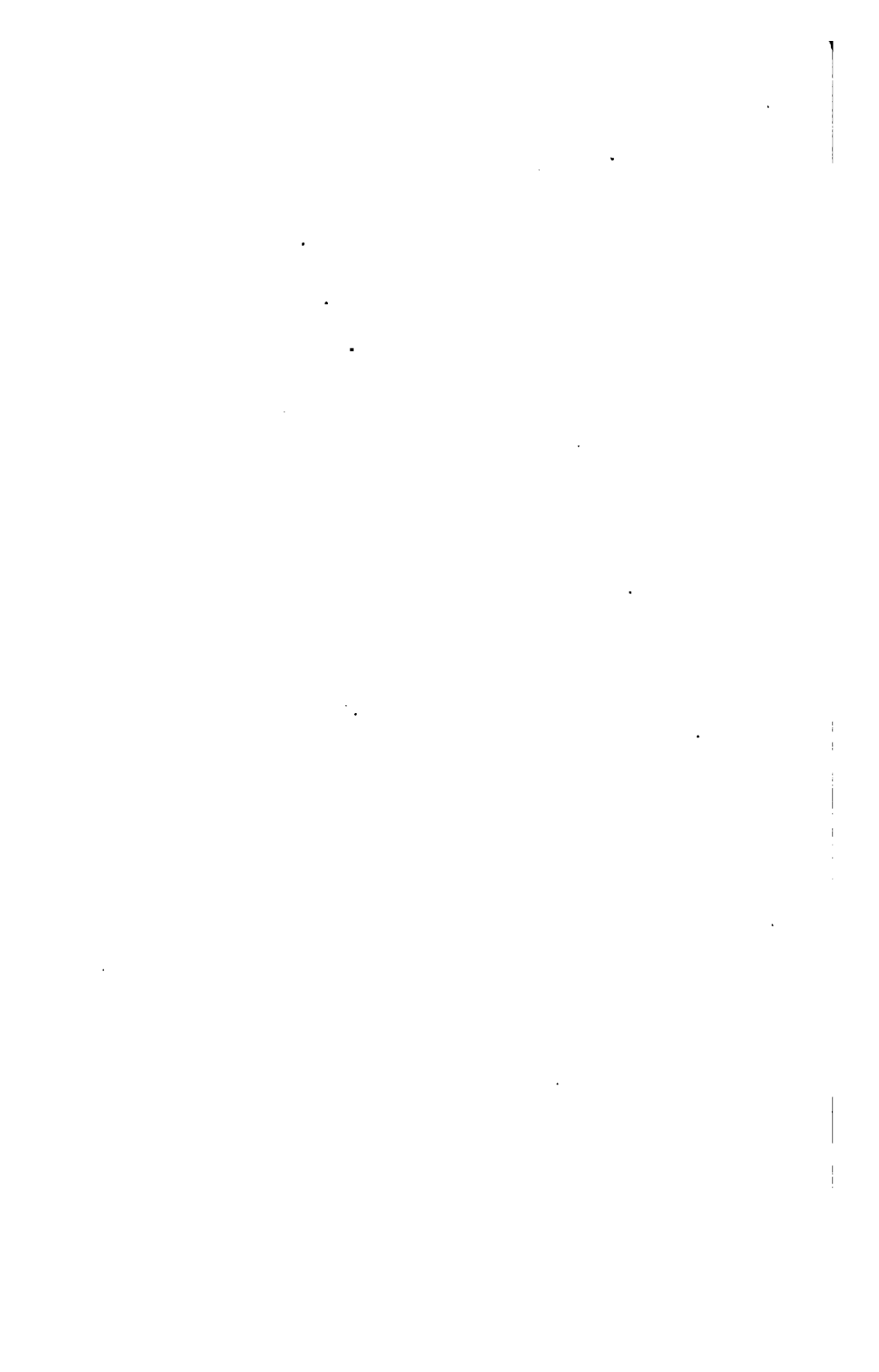
In half an hour the gate of the fortress was creaking open before us, a Cossack in front lighted the way with a torch, and led me into an old ruinous chamber, the best that was to be found in the fortress.

END OF VOL. I.

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